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FREDERICK WILLIAM, THE GREAT ELECTOR.

From an engraving by Antonius Masson, 1683.

THE REIGN OF THE GREAT ELECTOR

An Historical Romance

BY

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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN
By MARY STUART SMITH

NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1900

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THE REIGN OF THE GREAT ELECTOR.

THE GREAT ELECTOR IN POWER.

BOOK I.

I.—A Family Festival.

The cathedral bells were ringing and cannon thundering from the low ramparts of the fortress of Berlin. These festive sounds announced to the gaping, listening crowd, who thronged the space between the cathedral and castle, that the solemn ceremony in the cathedral was over, that the Princess Charlotte Louise, eldest sister of Elector Frederick William, had just been married to Duke Jacob of Kurland, and that the priest had pronounced a blessing upon the pair.

The people, however, did not add their benediction, they had no loving congratulations for the newly married couple. The court had been too long absent from Berlin, and during the five years of the present Elector's administration, he had himself only once visited Berlin for a short time, and his family not at all. Not until now, in the middle of the year 1645, had the Electoral family returned to Berlin, and the Elector announced to the magistrates and citizens of his "loyal resident city" that he expected to take up his abode at Berlin for a long time, perhaps for good.

With high-sounding words had the magistrates and citizens replied to this Electoral message, but at the bottom of their hearts they felt but little pleasure at the news. The common people of Berlin had received the tidings with perfect indifference. They had been so long oppressed by the perpetually recurring calamities of war that they were no longer capa-

ble of joyful emotions. So reduced were they by poverty and distress, that they could think of nothing but their own bitter sorrows, and not unless their Prince had brought them relief from poverty and want would they have given him a cordial reception.

But the Elector was poor—that they knew; the Elector himself was straitened for want of money, and often had difficulty in providing maintenance for his princely household. The Mark had been utterly exhausted by war, and the States of Prussia had refused their consent to the tax imposed by the Elector.

The Elector had no money! Why, then, should the people of Berlin rejoice in his presence? The Elector gave his sister in marriage, and, conformably with a time-honored usage, his subjects must endow the bride! Why, then, should this marriage gladden the hearts of the poor Berlin folk, since it threatened them with the imposition of new taxes, and was to fetch from the carefully locked chest the hard-earned two-groschen-piece assessed to each individual?

No, not out of love but curiosity had the people flocked hither, thronging the cathedral square and castle grounds. They wished to see the Electoral family move in state, they wished to enjoy a spectacle that possessed one merit at least —that of costing them no money.

The bells continued to ring merrily and cannon were still thundering salutes from the walls, when the cathedral door opened and the pastor Stoschius stepped forth upon the cathedral square, in simple clerical attire, with the accompanying tall black velvet cap upon his head. The incumbents of all the other churches of Berlin followed; but their faces were grave and sad, for only in deference to a stringent order of the Elector had they consented to attend service in a Reformed church, and witness a ceremony performed by a Calvinistic minister. A peculiar movement was perceptible among the closely packed multitude on the appearance of the preachers. Here some were seen to bow profoundly, as the cathedral pastor Stoschius passed, there others proudly kept their heads erect and eyed the ministers of the Reformed Church with threatening looks, while they reverentially lowered their eyes

before the Lutheran ministers following them, who again, in their turn, were greeted by the disrespectful mutterings of those attached to the Reformed Church, whose faith the Electoral family professed. But the procession following the clergy was fortunately calculated to divert the attention of the multitude, and to make them forget their mutual hatred of creed in the common feelings of curiosity and love of sight-seeing.

It was truly a very grand procession that filed along behind the priests, the sacristans and the choristers of the gray cloister. First the Elector's hundred life-guardsmen were seen to march by, their uniforms glittering with gold lace, and their weapons shouldered. Then came the High Chamberlain Conrad von Burgsdorf in a velvet suit embroidered with gold, and on his head a gold-brimmed hat, surmounted by nodding plumes attached by a large diamond clasp. He was followed by the six members of the privy council in their robes of office. Now came the Electoral pages in velvet clothes trimmed with silver lace, then the court marshal and chamberlains in their dress uniforms, and behind them, a small space intervening, appeared the Elector Frederick William in a magnificent court dress buttoned across the breast with immense diamond studs, and around his slender yet well-developed form a broad belt set with emeralds, pearls, and rubies. He led by the hand his sister, the newly married Duchess of Kurland, who in her exquisite bridal toilet was lovely to behold. And yet the eyes of the multitude rested upon her only for a short time, and but a cursory glance did they bestow upon the succeeding couples, viz., the Dowager Electress, who accompanied Duke Jacob of Kurland, and the Princess Sophie Hedwig, who was escorted by the Duke's brother.

The eyes of the multitude saw all this, but they ever returned to the Elector, to that noble and energetic countenance full of youthful fire and manly seriousness, those finely curved lips around which hovered a smile so sad and yet so sweet. His dark-blue eyes were fixed with long, beaming glances upon the multitude, who permitted him to pass in silence, without sympathy as it seemed, and yet wholly lost in his contemplation. This silence of the people seemed to vex him, for a cloud

passed over his brow. But it vanished as quickly as it came, and was lost in the brightness of the smile that lighted his countenance as he kindly bowed to the right and left, as if in return for the greetings which should have come from the people, who, however, let him pass by coldly and silently, asking themselves in view of all this splendor of dress, these diamonds, and these golden ornaments: "Why shall we stint ourselves for this Princess, who is encircled with pomp and glory while we suffer want and hunger! If the Elector has no money, why does he not sell some of his large diamonds? We have sold all that we possessed to buy ourselves bread, and now shall we, out of our poverty and rags, pay a wedding tax to this Princess, clad in silk and satin?"

And what they all thought, some at last began to speak aloud: "Herr Elector, remit the taxes! We are too poor to pay them! Herr Elector, excuse us from the wedding tax!"

At first only individual voices were heard, but ever louder, ever fuller swelled the chorus, until, like a gathering tempest, there swept across the broad cathedral square stentorian shouts of: "Herr Elector, spare us the tax! We are so poor—so wretched!"

The Elector seemed not to understand these loud, wild cries, perhaps because the ringing of bells and discharge of cannon actually rendered them unintelligible. Still he smiled and bestowed kind greetings right and left, yet he slightly quickened his pace, and began a lively conversation with the young Duchess at his side. Now they had traversed the cathedral square, passed the castle common, and reached the entrance of the pleasure garden, which must be crossed before gaining the castle on that side of the Spree. In Count Schwarzenberg's time this so-called pleasure garden had at least borne some remote resemblance to a princely park, for the Stadtholder in the Mark had occasionally bestowed a few ornamental shrubs and flowers upon it, out of magnanimous friendship for Elector George William, and had also had the complaisance to depute his own skillful gardener to put it in order a little every year. Then the trees had been artistically trimmed, the turf cut, and the walks covered with gravel.

But since Count Schwarzenberg's death, his palace had been deserted, and, as the young Elector resided at Königsberg, no one had troubled himself about the condition of the pleasure garden. The trees had shot up at random, the shrubbery had died out, and the turf disappeared; the drains leading to the Spree had become choked up, and pools of mud and water had gradually changed the soil into a swamp, hardly passable in damp, rainy weather. To-day, however, a path had been carefully provided for the princely family, by laying boards, and covering these with carpeting. But on both sides of this artificial road the mire and mud again held sway, and only a few foolhardy boys and ragged beggars had had the temerity to wade through this marsh, in order to see the procession pass.

The Elector experienced a sensation of relief, as he now walked through the quiet, deserted pleasure garden, and with a rare smile he leaned over toward the young Duchess at his side.

"Only see, sister," said he, "what a great lesson we have received to-day!"

"What lesson, Frederick?" asked Charlotte Louise softly.

"The lesson that we should despise nothing, esteem nothing small, not even the dirt in the road, because everything has its use. The dirt in the road here serves us as a bulwark against the rude, persistent mob, who have shamelessly molested us, and actually made me burn with anger. The dirt in the road protects us against the insults of the populace, and——"

"Gracious sir, oh, gracious sir, have pity on me! Give an alms to the poor wayside beggar, sir!"

The Elector broke off in the middle of his sentence, to listen to the mournful, pleading voice that cried to him.

This voice sounded strangely familiar, and awoke within him sad memories. He paused before the beggar, who had fallen on his knees in the mud beside the carpet, and stretched out both hands imploringly toward him.

"Pity, sir, pity!" cried the beggar a second time. "Give me an alms, gracious sir!"

"It is he, yes, it is he," murmured the Elector, whose eyes

rested piercingly upon the pale, begrimed features of the beggar.

"Gabriel Nietzel!" said he then, in a loud voice—"Gabriel Nietzel!"

The beggar shuddered and a scream escaped his lips. Almost joyfully he looked up at the Elector, but speedily this expression vanished and was succeeded by a dark cloud that overshadowed his countenance. "Gabriel Nietzel is dead," said he; "Gabriel Nietzel died in his sins, and has gone to hell!"

"Then let us pray for him, that Almighty God may release him!" cried the Elector.

"No, no, he will never be released!" shrieked the beggar in the voice of despair. "He was a shameful criminal!"

"But he had repented of his crime and done severe penance," said the Elector gently. "Come straight to the castle, and ask for my Chamberlain Kunkel. I have something to say to you."

He nodded kindly to the beggar and passed on, while he turned to his sister and begged her pardon for the delay.

"You knew that beggar then?" said the Duchess sympathetically.

"Yes, I knew him," replied the Elector. "He reminds me of a period of gloom, sorrow, and bitter humiliation, and—but here we are at the castle. I will tell you some other time. Permit me now to attend you to your apartments, and to bid you farewell."

"Brother," whispered the Duchess, "I would like to take leave of you without witnesses, for it seems to me I have much to say to you, that none other than God and yourself should hear."

The Elector nodded a kind assent and then turned to salute the ministers, who were standing on both sides of the castle door, the courtiers and pages having ranged themselves in their rear. With a friendly greeting and a few condescending words he dismissed his ministers and the nobles of his retinue. He then again turned to his sister, and handed her up the broad, carpeted staircase, leading to the upper corridor, where were situated the Electoral apartments.

In the small vestibule before the grand audience hall, the residents at court were assembled. The Elector stopped and turned with amiable address to accost the couple following him, viz., his mother and the Duke of Kurland.

"Here my office ceases and yours begins, dear brother-in-law," said he. "Therefore take your bride's hand and lead her into the hall. The nobility of the Mark wish to take leave of their beloved Princess, who, with cruel haste, must bid farewell to Berlin, and follow her husband within an hour after her nuptials."

"You know, brother-in-law, necessity compels me to make my departure so abrupt. Besides the courier of yesterday, another arrived to-day bringing urgent appeals for my return from my councilors and nobility. The Swedes threaten my duchy, and it is all important that I should be there, in readiness to protect my country and my people."

"You are right, Duke," exclaimed the Elector, with a nod of approval. "When the interests of one's land and people are at stake, all family considerations and personal desires should give way. Set out, therefore, and be assured that my love and best wishes attend you. And you, dearest mother, will grant my request, and honor the young ducal pair by escorting them to Potsdam?"

"I do so the more willingly," replied the Electress, "as my apartments in the castle are sadly out of repair and must be refitted. Yesterday the heavy rain quite deluged my dressing room. Pray, dear son, attend to having the needful repairs made, and for that reason I shall prolong my stay at Potsdam to two months."

"Do so, most gracious mother, and hear my promise! As soon as our affairs are in a little more prosperous condition, I shall have a stately palace built for you at any point within the Mark which you may designate, and it shall be so strong and solid that no rain or storm shall have power to molest you there."

"My son," cried the Electress joyfully, "I accept your generous offer, and have no hesitation in selecting a site, without further deliberation! Both of my estates are near Grossen, and in Grossen, therefore, I would like my palace to be."

"At Grossen be it then, dearest mother. And now, Duke, be pleased to conduct your bride into the hall. I have a request, though, to make of you, sister! When all is ready for the journey, be kind enough to come into my cabinet, that brother and sister may take an informal leave of one another. My brother-in-law I see makes no objection, and will not, I know, be jealous of a brother. *Au revoir* then!"

II.—Doing Penance.

With a kindly salutation the Elector left, to repair to his own apartments, not, however, through the great antechamber by means of which public access was had to the Elector, but through the small side corridor leading into the room of Chamberlain Kunkel, and thence into his own sleeping apartment.

In approaching this small corridor he was greeted by the voice of his chamberlain, speaking in loud, angry tones.

"It is madness," exclaimed this voice. "You can not speak to the Elector to-day. You misunderstood him! The Elector will not admit to audience such a shabby fellow as you are!"

"He has done so," replied a soft, gentle voice. "Yes, the Elector commanded me to come forthwith to the castle, and to desire you to conduct me to him. Else surely I should not have come here."

"You lie! The Elector would invite no beggar to a feast on his sister's wedding day."

"And why not, Kunkel?" asked the Elector, opening the door and coming in. "Are we not all beggars, who nevertheless hope to be invited to the great resurrection feast of the Lord of Hosts?"

"Most gracious sir," muttered Kunkel, "I did not know, I did not think that your grace——"

"Would speak to this man," interrupted the Elector. "Yes, I will speak to him, and that without delay! Come!"

said he, turning to the beggar, who stood at the door, his head meekly bowed upon his breast. "You, Kunkel, stay here and wait until this man comes back. Have some breakfast brought, that he may eat, drink, and grow strong. Come!"

He strode through the corridor and adjoining rooms until he reached his own cabinet. The beggar followed him, with bowed head and hands folded upon his breast.

At the cabinet door he stopped and awaited with humble, modest air the address of the Elector, who threw his hat and ermined mantle upon the table, and drew off his gold-embroidered gauntlets.

Then he drew near the beggar, and scrutinized him long, with kindly, sympathizing looks. Not once, though, did the beggar raise his eyes, nor did a single feature of his pale, thin face move.

"Gabriel Nietzel," asked the Elector after a long pause, "wherefore this disguise?"

"It is no disguise, sir," replied the beggar gently. "I am what I seem—I am a beggar."

"Why did you not apply to me when you were in want?" asked the Elector quickly. "Did I not expressly tell you at Königsberg that you would always find a protector in me? Did I not enjoin it upon you as a duty to turn to me if you were ever in distress, Gabriel Nietzel?"

The beggar was long silent and a momentary blush tinged his pale cheeks with red. "You call me by a name which does not belong to me," he said, with low, trembling voice. "My name is not Gabriel Nietzel. I know nothing of such a person."

"But I know of him," cried the Elector quickly. "I know that seven years ago, here at Berlin, poor Gabriel Nietzel allowed himself to fall into the snares of the tempter and was led into crime. I know that Gabriel Nietzel would have become a murderer if God in his mercy had not prevented it. But God sent me a messenger in the shape of a noble, high-souled woman. She came to me at the risk of her life, brought me deliverance from certain death, and gave her own life for mine! This noble, high-souled woman was the wife of him who meant to murder me, and to make atonement for *him*

whom she loved she went herself to meet death. Gabriel Nietzel, do you know of whom I speak? Need I tell you that this devoted woman, my deliverer, was your wife—that her name was Rebecca?"

"Rebecca!" cried the beggar, with so piercing a shriek that the Elector was moved to the very depths of his heart. "Rebecca!" repeated the man once more, while he fell upon his knees and sobbing and groaning covered his face with his hands.

"Will you still deny that you are Gabriel Nietzel?" asked the Elector.

"No," groaned the beggar—"no, I will not. I am Gabriel Nietzel, the much-to-be-pitied monster, who once bore that name. But I have cast it from me, I have scattered it to the four winds of heaven, as they scatter the ashes of a criminal, that they may find no sepulcher upon earth! Rebecca has no grave either, although she was an angel! Gabriel Nietzel is dead, and he will not rise from the dead until he has found his dead Rebecca's remains, and laid them in a tomb."

"Stand up, Gabriel Nietzel," commanded the Elector—"stand up and tell me where you have been and what you have been doing since the day I last saw you, five years ago, at Königsberg."

"Let me kneel, sir," implored Gabriel. "I can not look you in the face, for I read my crime upon your brow, and it bows me to the earth."

"God has accepted the atonement for your crime, Gabriel, and I have forgiven you."

"But I, sir, I have not forgiven myself, and Rebecca has not forgiven me either, else she would have let me find her grave, and taken me home to her. I have sought death these long years. I have sought it upon battle fields and upon the raging sea, I have gone to meet it in hospitals and at the bedside of those smitten with pestilence, but all in vain. In the depths of my despair I made a pilgrimage to Rome, barefooted and clothed in sackcloth, to beseech the Holy Father of Christendom to accept my penance and forgive me in the name of God. Three days and nights I knelt within the inner court of the Vatican, before the Pope's windows. On

the fourth day, in tender compassion, Innocent sent out his chamberlain to the ragged beggar to ask him why he had thus knelt and prayed for three whole days. And the beggar answered: 'That I can only reveal to the Holy Father himself. From a great distance have I journeyed hither barefooted, in order to confess to *him*. He alone can receive my confession.' The chamberlain left me, and a fourth day and night I remained upon my knees. But on the morning of the fifth day the Pope again sent his chamberlain to summon me to his presence in the Vatican. I could not, however, rise from my knees; my limbs refused to perform their office; four days of fasting, hunger, and thirst had exhausted all my strength, and I hoped even now that God in his mercy was about to release me from all the pains of earth. When I attempted to rise I fell back senseless. When I came to myself I was in a large room, encircled by strangers, who were regarding me with sympathizing looks. A physician had bled me, and was in the act of bandaging my arm; they had rubbed my forehead with restoratives, and moistened my parched lips with wine. A sweet fragrance filled the room. It was the odor of the viands they were bringing for me. Involuntarily I stretched out my hand for food, but drew it back, for I remembered my oath, neither to eat or drink until I had made confession to the Pope. When I told the chamberlain this he left the apartment, and in a few minutes returned with joyful countenance. The Pope summoned me to his presence. The Pope was ready to receive the beggar's confession!"

"Go on! Go on!" exclaimed the Elector, as Gabriel now paused, drawing a deep breath and bowing his head yet more deeply upon his breast.

"Do you wish it, sir? Have you patience enough to hear more of the criminal's story?"

"It interests me greatly, for you know he whom you call a criminal is the husband of the woman who saved my life. Speak then, Gabriel. Tell me more. Did you see the Pope?"

"Yes, I saw the Pope," replied Gabriel solemnly. "I knelt before him on the high cushion, which was placed ready for me near the Pope's armchair, and into his bowed and listening ear I whispered my confession. I veiled nothing, con-

cealed nothing, laying bare to him all the thoughts and actions of my life, making full confession of my sins and crimes, without reservation or attempt at palliation!"

"And the Pope? He pardoned you, did he not? He pronounced absolution upon you and gave you his blessing, since it was only a heretic whom you had purposed to kill? You are absolved from your sins, are you not, Gabriel? Speak; what said the Pope?"

"Sir, his were cruel words, which have haunted me ever since. Like the thunder of doomsday they are ever resounding in my ears, and I shall hear them at the hour of death! When I had ended my confession, the holy father rose from his seat and drew himself up erect, with angry face and flashing eyes. 'You were near killing,' said he, 'an heretical prince, a dangerous enemy of the Church and the holy faith. God had probably selected you as the instrument by means of which he would rid the world of this dangerous young Prince, who has evidently been armed by the powers of hell to do battle against religion and the Church. I pronounce you pure of this deed, I exonerate you from murder. In the name of God and the only true Church, I forgive you for all your errors, crimes, and sins but *one!* One crime, however, you have committed, for which there is no forgiveness either in this world or the next; one crime for which you must do penance both here and hereafter. The fires of purgatory await you. From this hour they shall burn for you on every path, filling your days and nights with anguish; they shall follow you to the grave and allow you there no rest; they shall rise with you, and even before the throne of God overwhelm you with dismay! For you have committed one crime, never forgiven by God or the Church. You have lived in criminal intercourse with a daughter of that accursed race which nailed our Saviour to the cross, you have taken a Jewess to your heart, instead of spurning her with your foot. You have wished to deceive God and man by passing off your Jewish mistress as your wife; you have given your name to the child of your shame, and have not yet had him admitted to the Christian communion, nor poured the holy waters of baptism upon that son of carnality and crime. Cursed be ye therefore all your

life, and cursed be your child! Happiness shall ever elude his grasp, and misfortune relentlessly pursue him. In shame and sin was he born, in sin and shame shall he live and die. You have confessed your fearful crime to me, the priest of the Lord, and the secrets of the confessional are sacred. Take heed, however, that in the priest of the Lord you do not arouse the earthly judge, and that the priest inform not the Pope of your wicked act, for the Pope dare show you no mercy; the law of the Church sentences to death by fire the criminal who has lived in carnal intercourse with a Jewess! Flee, therefore, flee away, lest the Pope take knowledge of your crime—flee, ere the secret of the confessional is made known to him! Cursed be you and the son of shame! Cursed be all they who show you pity, cursed be the compassionate souls, who extend their hands to you, cursed——'"

He grew speechless, muttering a few unintelligible words, then sank a lifeless, senseless mass upon the floor.

"Poor man," murmured the Elector compassionately—"poor victim of prejudice and hard-heartedness, I pity you! It shall not be said that the Calvinistic Prince has had no compassion upon the poor creature, condemned by the prince and priest of the Catholic Church."

He rang and ordered the chamberlain, who came hurrying in, to lift up the fainting beggar and to convey him into the antechamber, there to rub his forehead with vinegar and endeavor to restore him to consciousness.

But the Elector's sharp eye read in the chamberlain's countenance his inward reluctance to performing this office of love for a beggar. While Kunkel thus bent over the swooning man, wholly void of sympathy, and hesitating to touch him, the Elector quickly approached.

"Stop!" said he, "I did wrong to order you to remove this poor man to the antechamber. He is sick and suffering, and the sick and suffering should ever find a brother in the healthy. We will put him to bed here in my easychair!"

And the Elector stooped over the poor man and passed his arm under his shoulder.

"Gracious sir!" cried Kunkel, greatly shocked, "you will not lift the beggar with your own exalted hands!"

"And why not?" asked the Elector, smiling. "There is no one else here to help you, and God only sees us. Before God, though, we are all nothing but beggars, and He regards neither the purple of the prince nor the rags of the beggar. He only looks upon the heart."

And with strong arm Frederick William lifted up the beggar and laid him carefully and gently in the easychair.

"Now," said he, "run for restoratives and chafe his temples."

"I will fetch the essence of balm which is upon your dressing table!" cried Kunkel, whom the Elector's noble example had seemed to warm into sympathy.

"Do so," said the Elector kindly; "bring also the Tokay wine which stands beside it." On Kunkel's speedy re-appearance with the two bottles the Elector with his own hands sprinkled a few drops of the essence of balm upon the temples of the swooning man, while Kunkel held a handkerchief steeped in the same under his nose.

"Gracious sir, he is stirring," whispered Kunkel joyfully —"he is coming back to life."

"Poor man!" sighed the Elector, "perhaps it would be better for him not to come back to life! It is true, though, that he is stirring and will soon be awake. Go out, Kunkel, I prefer being left alone with him."

Kunkel cast a last sympathizing look upon the beggar, and, seeing that he opened his eyes, gave a nod of satisfaction and left the room without delay.

"Where am I? What has happened to me?" murmured Gabriel Nietzel, casting a long dreamy glance around him. Then, when his eye met the sympathizing gaze of the Elector, a shudder crept over the unhappy man's whole frame, and, as if stung by horror, he sprang from the chair in which he lay.

"My God! who put the beggar to bed in the Elector's seat?" cried he as if shocked. "Who took pity upon the murderer?"

"I," replied the Elector softly. "I am not his holiness the Pope, who condemned and cursed you. I am only your fellow, and therefore I can forgive where he condemned and

bless where he cursed. Yes, Gabriel Nietzel, I pronounce a blessing upon you, a blessing in the name of that noble, devoted woman, who for your sake met her death. It is true that she belonged to that unhappy people, who crucified our Lord; she was a Jewess. Nevertheless, within her dwelt the love of God, and she followed the Saviour's glorious example. In giving herself for the sins of others she atoned for your crime, and delivered me from death in order to win eternal life for you and free you from the course of the evildoer. To save your soul was the only reward which she coveted from God or man. She was a Christian by deed if not by profession; she obeyed the law of love and sealed it with her blood. And therefore, I, Elector Frederick William, say: She died as she lived, in love. No stain was found upon her, no shame or dishonor was attached to her. The confession of faith belongs to man, but faith itself to God, who regards not the name of Catholic or Calvinist, Jew or heathen, but only men who keep his commandments, loving and exhorting one another to good and pious works. Gabriel Nietzel, your Rebecca died the death of a Christian, and you may claim her as your wife before God and men, for God united you. God has taken to himself the wife of your bosom. Blessings upon Rebecca's memory. Be it held sacred, and revered by you and me, although the Pope at Rome has pronounced sentence against her."

"Oh, sir, sir!" cried Gabriel Nietzel, lifting up his clasped hands to the Elector. "You esteem my Rebecca, then; you do not call her an accursed Jewess?"

"She has gone home to God, for she was a child of God!" said the Elector mildly.

The beggar uttered a cry of rapture, and rushed toward the Elector. Falling upon his knees, he kissed his garments, embraced his knees, and pressed his lips upon his feet.

"You are my priest! You are my pope!" he cried with enthusiasm. "I believe you, sir, when you say that my Rebecca is not doomed to everlasting misery, but has been saved by her love."

"You, too, Gabriel Nietzel, you, too, she saved—you, too, she purified from sin and crime. Awake then, Gabriel; lift up your head and be a man! Cast aside these rags, be up and

doing! Work becomes a man, no idle, inactive penance can procure him forgiveness. In the name of God, in the name of love and Rebecca, I charge you to resuscitate the painter Gabriel Nietzel, and restore him to his art and usefulness!"

"No, sir, no. I dare not," said the beggar, sorrowfully shaking his head. "Gabriel Nietzel is dead, and nothing can release him from the power of the grave. My lips are bound by a solemn oath, which nought but death can loosen!"

"To whom have you given this oath?"

"To God, Rebecca, and myself, sir. When the Pope thrust me from him, an unforgiven criminal, and without absolution drove me back to life, then in my utter despair I became for the second time a murderer—the murderer of myself. From the Vatican I rushed forth like a madman. Whither I knew not. I fled before an unknown terror, before a specter that pursued me with mockery and laughter, hunting me farther, ever farther. Through streets and squares I ran; when I fell, I got up and ran again; when men tried to lay hold of me, I broke away from them and ran on and on. When the shades of evening fell I sank down, senseless and exhausted. Near me I heard the roaring of waters, before me I saw a black, monstrous mass, a huge and yawning sepulcher. I saw before me the Tiber, inviting me to its cruel, yet welcome embrace, calling to me with its ceaseless murmurings. I cried aloud for joy. I stretched out my arms and sprang into the abyss. The waves closed gurgling over me, forced me once more to the surface to drag me into the depths again. There was a ringing as of bells in my ears, my feet seemed weighted down by iron fetters, and I was drawn down the stream as upon the wings of the hurricane. My senses forsook me, I sank."

"Horrible!" murmured the Elector. "And how did you escape the tomb?"

"I did not escape it, sir, but the tomb escaped me. It would not accept me and permit me to taste of its repose. Even death would have no fellowship with the criminal, and pitilessly hunted him again into life. On the ruins of the old Tiber bridge, where once the Horatii and Curiatii had fought their deadly combat, on this heap of stones near the shore,

I found myself on awakening from my deathlike slumber in the middle of the night. I lay for a long while motionless, looking up at the starry sky, and listening to the voices of the night, the waves, and the wind. All shrieked in my ear: 'Live to do penance, faithless father, who forgot his child, and would have left him a lonely orphan in the world! Live to do penance and to make amends!' I crept down from the rubbish to the shore, and there fell upon my knees, lifted up my arms to Heaven, and cried with loud, echoing voice to God: 'I will live to do penance. As a beggar pleading for mercy will I stand before God and men. In sackcloth, poor and naked, I will go through life. I will renounce my art, ambition, and all the amenities of life. Gabriel Nietzel is dead, and nothing remains of him but a beggar, groveling in the dust and living upon the charities of mankind. For the sake of money Gabriel Nietzel became a criminal, therefore in poverty, want, and penance shall he journey to the grave!' That I swore to the Great Spirit, who dwells enthroned above the clouds; swore by the name of my son—swore that this child should never learn who was his father, that I would bring him up to regard me as his servant, standing apart from him, and never laying claim to his love. I shall keep my oath, sir, till I breathe forth my last gasp."

"Where is your son, Gabriel Nietzel?" asked the Elector.

"I had left him at Venice with Rebecca's father. From Rome I traveled there, in order to reclaim him and take him with me. I found him in the Ghetto, hungry, and lying half naked in the street. His grandfather had died, and, as no heirs made their appearance, the Government had assumed the inheritance and confiscated the property. The poor boy would have died if the poor Jews of the Ghetto had not had compassion upon him. I took him with me, and together we traversed the whole of Germany; I begged for him, I suffered want for him; I shall beg for him while I live, and that is and shall be the only aim of my existence."

"But you can not wish the boy to partake of your miserable existence," said the Elector. "Surely you would not condemn the innocent child to your life of penance. Give him to me! I will give to the son what I owe to the mother; I

will pay to him my debt of gratitude! Give me Rebecca's son!"

"Sir, no, that I can not do!" cried Gabriel quickly. "Sir, I will do penance; my whole life is one of repentance and mortification. But this one thing is too hard, too intolerable! Leave me my son, leave me Rebecca's child!"

"Abraham gave up his son when God required it, and Abraham was no sinner," said the Elector severely. "No crime burdened his soul, but he was humble and obedient, and, to propitiate God, offered up the dearest thing he possessed upon earth. You, too, Gabriel Nietzel, should be humble and obedient, and offer in sacrifice to God and your duty the dearest thing you have upon earth. I demand your son of you, that he may be brought up a God-fearing, honest, and virtuous man. If you refuse to give him to me, you are no lowly, contrite servant of God, but a selfish man, who prefers the gratification of his own wishes to the welfare of his poor, unfortunate child, who for his sake must be a despised pauper!"

"No, sir, no!" cried Gabriel, "my Raphael shall not be a pauper! No, you shall not say that I am selfish and hard-hearted! I will conquer my heart, I will renounce the last thing that is mine—the last joy of my existence! I will give you my child, sir, that he may grow up to be a virtuous man, I will——"

His voice was choked by tears, he heaved a convulsive sob, and his whole frame shook as with ague.

"My child, my beloved child!" he whispered, while the tears streamed down his sunken cheeks. "My Raphael! I shall tear thee from my heart; I shall see thee no more—no more drink in consolation from thy dear face, and no more see my Rebecca's eyes mirrored in yours. I shall shut out the last star of my existence, and wander away in darkness and in solitude."

"It must be so," said the Elector, with a voice full of emotion, visibly touched by the grief and tears of the unhappy man. "You must make this sacrifice to the welfare of your son, and save him from your misery. It is not right that he should suffer with you, and be sentenced to your life of pen-

ance. Give me Rebecca's child, and I swear that I will do all I can to make him a happy man!"

"I give him to you, sir—I resign my son. Only be pitiful, and let me keep him a few days more."

"How long, Gabriel, would you have him? Appoint your own time—say when you will bring him to me."

"Grant him to me eight days longer, sir, eight days!" implored Gabriel, with trembling, choking voice.

"Well, be it so! Keep the child eight days longer, and then bring him to me here in the castle!"

"I shall bring him, sir! In eight days, I shall bring you my Raphael, and transfer him to your care. But until then he is mine, until then I may see and speak to him! Ah, sir, dismiss me now, that I may go to my child—that I may not lose a moment of the time I am still to have him with me!"

"Go, Gabriel, and, that you may have no need to beg for these eight days, take this piece of gold."

He tried to lay it in Gabriel's hand, but the latter drew back. "No, sir," he said gently, "I have not begged of you, therefore I can not receive your gift. For these eight days Raphael is still my child, and he must live as his father does, although he knows not that I am his father. I beseech you, sir, to dismiss me, and permit me to go to my son."

"Go, then! But I depend upon your word, Gabriel Nietzel. In eight days you are to bring me your son. I shall expect you at nine o'clock in the morning."

"In eight days I shall bring him to you. But one request more I have to make of you. Call me not Gabriel Nietzel any longer, for, as I have already told you, Gabriel Nietzel is dead."

"And who are you then, poor man?"

"I am the beggar Claus—nothing more, sir——"

"Brother, may I come in?" asked a voice outside the grand antechamber, while the door was gently opened.

"You are welcome, Duchess," said the Elector, and as he advanced to meet her, Gabriel Nietzel hurried out through the door of the small antechamber.

III.—Brother and Sister.

"Was not that the beggar we passed just now in the pleasure garden?" asked Charlotte Louise.

"Yes, it was he," replied the Elector, sighing. "A poor unfortunate man, whom I used to know under different circumstances, and whom I called here that he might acquaint me with the particulars of his life. Ah, sister, there is but little joy and happiness upon earth, and much bitter grief and suffering. Vain is our contest with life, and what do we gain by it at last? Many disappointments and few gratifications, many humiliations and few triumphs!"

"But methinks, brother, one triumph outweighs a hundred defeats, and one success obliterates the memory of a hundred disappointments."

"I agree with you in that," cried the Elector, with beaming eyes. "Although, alas! up to this time there has been but little in my experience to verify such an assertion. During the course of my five years' sovereignty I have only to tell of disappointments and humiliations, but——"

"But your triumphs and successes will come," interposed the Duchess, with animation of manner.

"I hope and believe so," cried the Elector; "and had not such hopes brightened the difficult path I have been called upon to tread for the past five years, I should have sunk under my burdens. But amid all my varied discouragements, I ever consoled myself with the thought, my time will come! For me, too, will dawn a day of retribution and triumph! This I said to myself when I knelt before the King of Poland and swore allegiance to him; this I repeated when I received the tardy and unwilling homage of my obstinate States; this consoled me when I looked upon the small number of my wretched, ill-clad soldiery, the towns and States refusing me money to fill up my regiments; this I repeat to myself day and night. Yes, my time will come, for *me*, too, shall dawn a day of retribution and triumph! I tell you this, sister, in the hour of our parting, that you may think of me hopefully and cheerfully; that you may know that your poor brother does not

always expect to go with bowed head and humble mien, seeking to conceal his insignificance beneath the shadow of other great contending parties. No, sister, I am quietly and little by little preparing the great broad road upon which, God willing, I shall one day march gloriously at the head of a brave and victorious army. This is my goal—this is my hope!"

"And you will reach your goal; it is written upon your brow!" cried Charlotte Louise enthusiastically. "You will make yourself and your country great and glorious. So says my heart, so says the glance of your eagle eye! I thank you, Frederick, for this revelation of yourself and your designs, on the eve of our separation."

"It is not often that I indulge in confidences," said the Elector, smiling, "few can boast of knowing my thoughts and plans. He who would attain to any eminence in this life must carefully conceal his purpose from others, for the world is wicked and envious, loving to obstruct the way of the small who would become great, and seeking by all possible means to prevent their growth."

"But you will grow, despite Emperor and empire, and all your enemies and ill-wishers. Ah, brother, how enviable is your lot compared with mine. You look forward confidently to the future, and if at present your sky is clouded, yet at the edge of the distant horizon are discernible the crimson hues which betoken a brilliant sunrise; while I see nothing before and around me but pale and somber twilight, a starless sky, and an aimless path."

"Do you not love your husband?" asked the Elector.

"Brother," replied Charlotte Louise, with a melancholy smile, "when you notified me of my engagement you did not ask me that question, but simply informed me that I must consider myself the Duke's betrothed."

"You did not know the Duke then, Louise, you had only seen him once, and could not have been expected to love him."

"Very true," sighed Louise, "I had only seen him once, and did not know him; but for all that I was his betrothed."

"But now, Louise, you have seen him daily for a fortnight, and ought to be sufficiently well acquainted with him to know whether you can love him and be happy with him."

"And what good would result if I should answer no, brother? It is true I have passed fourteen days in the society of the Duke of Kurland, and therefore had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with him. But never once during this time did my brother or mother ask me if I could love the man whom they had selected for my husband. To-day, though, the question comes too late, for my fate is irrevocably sealed. I accept it as becomes a princess; I submit to it with patience, and an honest purpose to bear it unmurmuringly. The Duke is a good man, and that is always a firm foundation upon which to base a calm and peaceful existence, provided that the wings of inclination are cropped so short that they can not fly beyond the narrow confines to which they are forcibly restricted."

"And do your thoughts and wishes never fly out, sister," asked the Elector, fixing his eyes upon his sister with a look of warmest sympathy.

She cast down her eyes and sighed. "Frederick," she said timidly after a long pause—"Frederick, let me ask you one question at this parting hour. To-day separates me forever from my past, and I would not have a single dark spot left about which my thoughts might revolve, fruitlessly striving to brighten it."

"And therefore you would learn of me what has become of Count John Adolphus von Schwarzenberg, and whether I am still at feud with him. Is not that the question you wished to address to me, Louise?"

"Yes, brother, that is the question. Throughout these long years I have never pronounced his name, never spoken of him to any one. But I know that he contends with you, and will not bend to your will. Tell me all you know of him. Tell me everything, and remember that in this hour I lay the last blossoms of memory upon the coffin of my past before entering upon a new life."

"Do *you* know nothing at all about him?" asked the Elector, fixing his penetrating glance upon her.

Again the Princess cast down her eyes and was long silent. "Three weeks ago," said she then, with short, quick breath—"three weeks ago, on entering my dressing room, I found lying upon the table a sealed paper, addressed to me. It con-

tained the information that Count John Adolphus von Schwarzenberg had married a Countess Stahremberg."

"And you doubt the truth of this information?"

"I doubt it, because there is no one to confirm it, and because I thought that——"

"Well, what did you think, Louise?"

"That perhaps some one might have an interest in persuading me that the count was married, because—because ——"

"Because this some one might imagine, that if you believed the count to be married, you might yourself be inclined to marry? You were quite right in your supposition, sister, for it was I who sent you that information."

"I thought I recognized your handwriting, brother."

"I did not disguise it, for I wanted you to know from whom it came."

"I thought I divined your intention to be to arouse my heart from its melancholy reveries, and warn it against occupying itself with a man on whom it would be a sin to think as soon as he was married. I thought I divined, moreover, that I was to be married myself, and that you meant to remind me that the past was irretrievably gone."

"Sister, you are an acute and deep-seeing diplomatist," said the Elector, smiling, "and therefore I venture not to contradict you. Yes, you understood rightly all that I wished to say to you, and I thank you for shaping your course accordingly. It was of the greatest consequence to me to have an ally, who might serve me as a bulwark against both Sweden and Poland, and unite his strength with mine, if I should some day take the field against either of these two powers. Therefore I gladly accepted the proposals of the Duke of Kurland, and therefore I thank you now for having comprehended my desires and acted in accordance with them. Now I am certain that, if there should be war between the Poles or Swedes and the Elector of Brandenburg, I shall at least have one firm ally. My beloved sister, the Duchess of Kurland, will take care that her husband be not on the side of my enemies."

"Yes, brother, be assured of that. I thank you for those words, for you give me thereby some object in living. I shall

now strive earnestly to deserve the Duke's love, and gain influence over him, that I may at some future time be useful to my beloved brother. But, brother, you have not answered my question——"

"Have I not?" said the Elector, smiling. "It is true I have some further tidings to impart to you concerning Count Schwarzenberg, the Emperor Ferdinand's favorite. He is in high favor yet, it seems, and is one of his Imperial Majesty's most trusted ministers. And the Emperor shows his wisdom in employing the count in his service, for he is a clever diplomatist, of clear head, sharp wit and cold heart, void of principle, as most politicians are, perfectly unscrupulous, and only pursuing his own interests, be they personal or political. Count Schwarzenberg belongs to the number of my most bitter opponents, although at present he draws in his claws, and has flattered and caressed my ambassador at Frankfort in the most friendly manner, in order to make him Imperialist in his views. Meanwhile we are ourselves a little versed in the arts and wiles of diplomacy, and will not allow ourselves to be hoodwinked by such flatteries, or give up our litigation with the count. He will by and by be forced to retreat from his position, and must see that all things are not progressing as he could wish and desire. His pretensions to the office of Grand Master of the Knights of St. John he has already been obliged to give up, and solemnly renounce all claim to it, because all the members of the order declared that they would not have him as their head.* But fortune, which seems particularly to favor this aspiring and avaricious young man, forthwith indemnified him for his disappointment. In the first place he married the wealthy Countess Stahremberg, and then his cousin, George Louis Schwarzenberg, died without heirs, leaving Count John Adolphus to inherit the rich manors of Schwarzenberg and Hohen-Landsberg, and become at the same time the head of the family. It is to be expected that the Emperor's favor will grant to the son the darling wish of the father, by changing Adolphus Schwarzenberg's title from count to that of prince. This, sister, is all I have to communicate to you with regard to this man. But, no, I forgot

* Carl Renains Häuser's State Papers, vol. iii, p. 42.

to mention one thing: Despite the velvet paws which he displays to Wesenberg, he has urged a complaint against me before the Emperor, persisting that we owe him almost a million dollars, because to that sum amounted the advances of money made at different times by Count Adam to our father. He can hardly, however, prove the half of these claims, and we are not disposed to pay unauthorized debts—in the first place, because it is contrary to our sense of justice; and, secondly, because our coffers are empty. I would indeed be glad if such sums as the count demands were in my own treasury, for in that case many things would be very different from what they are now. For money is power, and a million of dollars would be an all-conquering army."

"Happy those who can be content with the possession of such an army!" sighed the Duchess. "Happy those who have dethroned the heart, and find the fullness of their wishes in the gratification of their selfishness and ambition! In this sense Count Adolphus will be happy, and I shall rejoice that it is so, for personal satisfaction is the highest thing after which men strive, and if he finds his in gold and titles, power and influence, I shall not find fault with him on that score. I have no longer any interest in him. Thank you, dearest brother, for all that you have said to me; your words have been the stones with which I have immured recollections of the past in the vault of my heart. They can never revive and come forth again; this thought even now consoles me. I thank you for all the love which you have bestowed upon me, and I beseech you to keep a small place in your heart for your absent sister. I shall have time enough to think of you, and I am sure that my dear brother will often give me occasion to hear of him."

"You think then, sister, my name will not be wholly obscure, and melt away into nothingness?"

"I know that you will inscribe it in golden letters upon the pages of history. I know that through you, Brandenburg will become great and powerful, and that you will win honor and fame from the whole world."

The Elector's countenance grew radiant and a wondrous smile lit up his features. "I thank you, sister," said he sol-

emnly; "may you be a true prophetess. The honor, fame, and greatness of my country are the ends for which I strive, which I shall pursue with unceasing ardor. Truly, these are objects well worthy the devotion of a whole life."

"And love, brother? Shall love have no share of your life?"

"No, I have nothing to do with her," replied the Elector, almost roughly. "All I ask of her is to keep at a distance and not divert me from my high pursuits. I envy her not her myrtle crown. May she not prevent me from earning at least one laurel wreath for my grave. But hark! sister, the posthorns blow, and your husband will be vexed with me for detaining his Duchess so long from his side."

"The hour of departure has come," sighed the Duchess. "I must bid you farewell, Frederick, must leave behind my home and family! Oh, forget me not in your joy and prosperity; think of the solitary sister, who, afar off, desolate and in retirement, will pine away longing for her home, brother, sister, and mother. Brother, let me kiss you once more; who knows whether it will not be for the last time in this life?"

"Come, sister, come to your brother's heart, your truest, best friend, who will never cease to love you!"

They held each other in a long, close embrace, and then exchanged tender glances, the eyes of both being moistened with tears.

"Farewell, Frederick!"

"Farewell, Louise!"

"Give me your hand and lead me out; I will not weep, for the Duke shall not think that I follow him unwillingly!"

"You have a noble, courageous heart! Come, beloved sister! May God's blessing attend you, and love gladden your days! Come, I will lead you to your husband."

IV.—The Offer of Marriage.

The carriages rolled through the palace gate and across the cathedral square, where the people were still collected in scattered groups, greeting the young ducal pair with friendly cheers as they passed. The Elector stood upon the small landing place before the palace, and followed the retreating equipages with mournful glances, until the last had disappeared around the corner of the square, when he turned and slowly re-entered the palace.

How silent and desolate it seemed as he now mounted the stairs and walked down the long corridor! How melancholy he felt as he passed the doors leading to the apartments of his mother and sisters! He was alone, quite alone! No one there to look upon him with friendly, sympathizing eyes, no one to greet him with kind words of affection.

It made him sad, but he would not acknowledge it to himself; the Elector Frederick William would not allow himself to be a foolish, lovelorn man!

"He who would be great must be solitary," said he to himself, while involuntarily he shook his head. "He who dedicates himself to ambition and renown dare not admit other feelings into his heart, and weakly long for human love. Be courageous and resigned then, Frederick William! You are not alone, for the hopes of your future are with you. You are not solitary, for you have a people to love and make happy. Lift up your head and look aloft. We build for the future, and a sorry edifice it will be if we do not with joyful zeal devote to it every energy of our nature."

And as he thus spoke his countenance grew radiant, and he threw his head proudly and boldly back. Thus he entered his cabinet and began to sing in a rich, manly voice the melody of his favorite song. Then, as if his heart felt strengthened by the song, he began to add words to the melody:

"At Lützen, that field crowned with glory and light—hurrah!
Gustavus Adolphus, the hero, gave fight—hurrah!
He died for the truth, which he lived to defend;
How brave was his life and how noble his end!

Now 'God's will be done!' was his watchword till death,
'The Lord Jesus Christ' his sole refuge by faith—hurrah!

"Now Pappenheim and the fierce Wallenstein swore—hurrah!
At Lützen that Sweden should conquer no more—hurrah!
Gustavus and Bernhard, though, suffered it not,
And drove their proud enemies quick from the spot.
The Emperor's troops broke, faltered, and fled;
Lo! Sweden has conquered—her King, though, is dead!"

"Well, what will you have, Kunkel?" asked he, breaking off in his song, as the door of the antechamber opened hurriedly, and the chamberlain made his appearance.

"Gracious sir, the Lord High Chamberlain von Burgsdorf is without in the anteroom, accompanied by three strange gentlemen, and requests an audience with your Electoral Grace."

"Open the doors then, and admit the gentlemen," said the Elector, as he arose from his seat and turned his flashing eyes toward the door, in which appeared the Lord High Chamberlain von Burgsdorf, followed by three lords gorgeously arrayed in gold-embroidered suits. Each of them held in his right hand, set off by rich plaited lace cuffs, a letter bearing a massive seal, and not upon the Elector but this letter did they gaze with serious and solemn mien.

"Your Electoral Grace," said Conrad von Burgsdorf, endeavoring to make his red face assume an expression of gravity —"your Electoral Grace, I entreat the privilege of presenting these lords. They are three ambassadors extraordinary from Bavaria, Saxony, and the Electorate of Mentz. Here is Baron von Straubing, ambassador from the Elector of Bavaria; the second lord is Count Fleming, ambassador extraordinary of the Elector of Saxony; and the third lord is Baron von Thumen, ambassador from the Elector of Mentz."

"And what would these ambassadors extraordinary from the three Electors have of me?" asked the Elector.

"We each beg to be permitted to hand to the Elector of Brandenburg a missive sent by our several Sovereigns," replied Baron von Straubing, with bold step approaching the Elector and holding out to him the letter.

Already had Frederick William stretched out his hand to

take it, when Burgsdorf thrust himself between him and the Bavarian envoy, whom he repulsed with a haughty gesture.

"You know very well what my office is," said he, with loud, angry voice; "and you also know very well, Sir Ambassador, that sovereigns are not accustomed to have letters stuck into their hands in that unceremonious fashion, as if they were love letters too precious to be seen by other eyes. His Electoral Grace, however, has no such especial love and intimacy with any Elector in the German empire as to warrant this love letter style of correspondence. Therefore I must beg of your lordships to place your letters in my hands for further transference to his Electoral Grace."

"We beg pardon!" cried both the other envoys, immediately coming forward; "we were expressly directed by our masters to transmit this writing to his Electoral Grace in person."

"Then give them to me, sirs," said the Elector, again extending his hand. "I am ready to receive your writing."

"No, Sir Elector, no I can not suffer that!" cried Burgsdorf with scarlet face. "It is an infringement of my rights, and I will not allow etiquette to be so totally laid aside. These gentlemen say that their lords directed them to hand their letters to your Electoral Grace in person, but they have forgotten most humbly, with the reverence due your grace, to ask permission to execute their master's instructions. It is by no means enough that the other Electors have a will; the Elector of Brandenberg has also a will of his own, and since he has been kind enough to constitute me lord high chamberlain, I must needs perform the duties of my office and repel every transgression of the laws of etiquette. Most gracious sir, I accordingly beg for these three gentlemen, envoys, who have appeared here most humbly and reverentially, the high privilege of being permitted to put their Sovereigns' letters into your exalted hands. Will you condescend, sir, to tell me whether you can grant them this favor?"

"Yes, lord high chancellor," replied the Elector, smiling, "I will accord to these envoys permission to deliver to me the communications they bring from their Electors."

Conrad von Burgsdorf turned with a solemn air of im-

portance to the ambassadors: "Gentlemen, his Electoral Grace most graciously condescends to receive your dispatches! Draw nearer then; his highness permits you so to do!"

The envoys advanced, although visibly disconcerted, while Burgsdorf, with flushed, triumphant face, stepped aside, in full consciousness of having maintained his dignity.

The Elector took the three letters and broke open the first one. With composed and smiling features he read its contents, and then laid it aside upon his writing table.

"Are the three communications alike?" asked he, opening the second missive.

"Yes, your Electoral Highness, exactly alike."

"Then I can spare myself the trouble of reading them, and it is enough that I have read the Elector of Bavaria's letter. It is verily worded in a tolerably haughty and wrathful tone, and accuses me of strange things."

"Strange things indeed. Your Electoral Highness, gave occasion thereto," replied Count Fleming briskly. "Your highness' envoy at Frankfort seems to desire to introduce some startling novelties, and——"

"Ah, Sir Count," interrupted the Elector, "you would continue in the same tone adopted by the Electors in writing to me; I therefore relieve you of the trouble of proceeding, and, instead of contending with you, begin our controversy by reference to your lords' letters—Chamberlain von Burgsdorf, read aloud to me this portion of the Electoral communication, for it contains the substance of the whole, the rest being mere courtly formalities."

He handed Burgsdorf the paper, and pointed out with his finger the place designated.

"'It has been almost with astonishment that we have perceived, through the advices of our representatives, that the Brandenburg deputy to the Diet, holding its sitting at Frankfort, has almost universally refused his consent to measures unanimously adopted by all the other Electoral delegates, giving as his excuse that he had not received instructions. We hope that Brandenburg will not be disposed to introduce novelties opposed to the declared sense of the whole body of Electors and established usage. Else we must esteem this a most

dangerous and hurtful innovation, and feel compelled to protest against it, while we beseech Brandenburg to adhere to time-honored customs and the union of Electors, and beg the Elector to give his envoy instuctions to that effect.* For the rest we remain——' "

"Enough!" interrupted the Elector. "The rest is mere formality, and we have not time, like the delegates of the German Empire at Frankfort, as also those at Münster and Osnabrück, to attend to the details of formality and etiquette. Hear now, gentlemen, my reply to this threatening address of the Electors, and have the goodness to pay good heed, for I do not intend to send an answer in writing! You may report to your several lords what I say to you. Above all things," continued the Elector with elevated voice—"above all things announce to the Electors that Brandenburg does not intend to be intimidated and frightened by evil and menacing language, and that it is not sufficient for the Electors to solicit me to adhere to time-honored customs, to submit to the decisions of the majority, and to introduce no innovations. Say to the Electors that it is not at all in accordance with my views and designs to submit patiently to what is decided by the majority of the Diet at Frankfort or any other place, and that I am fully prepared to introduce novelties. If I should always allow myself to be ruled by the majority, I would ever come off worst in the contest, and be behind all the other Electors. I would also be often compelled to vote against the peculiar interests of my land and people, thus entailing misfortune upon them; for well do I know that Brandenburg has few friends in the German Empire and among the German Princes. I know that the universal cry is, 'the Electorate of Brandenburg shall be kept down,' and that the votes of the Princes and their representatives will correspond to this cry. My watchword, though, is, 'Brandenburg shall rise.' That I may give her consideration in the German Empire, it becomes me not to succumb to any or be ruled by the majority, but I must needs go boldly and independently forward in my own way, and express and maintain my opinions in the face of the whole world. But least of all, gentlemen, do I feel disposed to be

* See Droysen, History of Prussian Politics, vol. iii. part 1, p. 281.

governed by the majority of this Diet at Frankfort, which meddles with many things by no means concerning it, while it neglects matters coming properly within its province. We summoned this Diet to determine questions relating to law and justice, common to all Germany, and instead of that they have busied themselves there with things altogether different, viz., with matters of conscience and religion, which ought to be decided at Münster or Osnabrück. Therefore my envoy at Frankfort does well in not consenting to what the other delegates have done, in deciding matters that ought never to have been discussed by that Diet. For the rest, I beg you, gentlemen, to tell your lords from me that I shall ever hold myself in cheerful readiness to unite with them in endeavoring to promote the interests of the empire.* This is the answer, which I have to impart to the written communications of the Electors; and now, gentlemen, you are dismissed!"

He greeted them with a short nod of his head, and stood proudly erect, while the ambassadors bowed low, and with measured tread and crestfallen countenances left the apartment. The Lord High Chancellor von Burgsdorf followed with triumphant mien, but only a few minutes had elapsed ere he returned to the cabinet.

"Your highness," said he gayly, "this seems to be indeed the day of grand audiences. Your delegate to Frankfort is in the antechamber, besides two other gentlemen—an ambassador from Emperor Ferdinand and one from the King of France. Whom shall I admit to audience first?"

"Him who has undoubtedly the right of precedence," replied the Elector. "Usher in the Emperor's envoy."

Burgsdorf hurried out and returned immediately, accompanied by a grave, proud-looking lord, in the full dress of a Spanish courtier.

"Your Electoral Highness," announced Burgsdorf, stepping close up to Frederick William and making a profound bow, "Count von Trautmannsdorf, the envoy of his Majesty Emperor Ferdinand, on his way to Osnabrück, wishes to be presented to your highness."

"It is you then, count, whom his German Majesty has

* The Elector's own words. See Droysen, p. 282.

deputed to attend the council at Osnabrück!" cried the Elector, with animation. "I congratulate the German Empire, nay, all Europe, upon the circumstance, for it is known to all the world that Count von Trautmannsdorf is not merely a highly polished, noble, and incorruptible gentleman, but of humane and impartial mind. Of such men we have especial need now in the councils of Münster and Osnabrück, where questions are to be settled touching the welfare of Europe as well as of the German Empire."

"Your Electoral Grace does me too much honor, indeed," said the count, smiling; "but I shall at least use my utmost endeavors, in passing to and fro from Osnabrück to Münster, to soothe and moderate party contentions."

"And you will be doing a noble deed, count," said the Elector kindly. "Only impress it on the delegates first of all to confine their attention to the principal subjects for consideration, and not to waste so much time upon mere preliminaries—not to wrangle and dispute about rank and titles, but, laying aside all such trifling, give themselves to their serious and important work. All Europe looks to these assemblies at Münster and Osnabrück; all people are hoping for their different religious creeds to be guaranteed to them, and hope for the settling of all controversies relating to Church and religion. What an impression will be made when it is seen that these men, who ought to give peace to princes and people, have commenced by quarreling with each other over pitiful and wholly irrelevant questions of etiquette! Call the attention of the counselors to this matter, count; tell the representatives of the great powers not to arrogate too much to themselves, and tell the representatives of small provinces and princes not to be too aspiring and expect to be placed upon a footing of equality with the great States."

"I shall attend with punctiliousness and devotion to executing your commands, and act upon your wise advice," replied Count Trautmannsdorf, bowing reverentially. "Your Electoral Grace will, however, permit me, I hope, to address my representations to his own deputy?"

"If his demeanor demands it, do so, count. Only I beg of you to consider that his task is totally different from that

of any other person there. The Electorate of Brandenburg is the youngest of the Electoral houses, and has hitherto been the smallest and most insignificant. I well know the general desire to keep under its growth and prevent its advancement in importance. I know, too, that I *will* just the opposite, and desire to be as great and powerful as my fellow-sovereigns. If Brandenburg is small, it only follows that she must increase in size; if she is reproached with youth, every day will remedy the fault, and her hereditary privileges should not surely be curtailed on that account."

"And no one I hope entertains such a thought, your highness," exclaimed Count Trautmannsdorf eagerly. "But least of all suspect his Imperial Majesty of such intentions. It lies near to his heart that your highness should everywhere receive the honor and devotion due you, for his Majesty cherishes a peculiar affection for your grace, and so ardently wishes your success and prosperity that he would be happy to contribute to them in every possible way."

"If his Imperial Majesty is indeed so graciously disposed toward me, I can not doubt but that I shall be ultimately fortunate."

"Your grace, however, should on your side prove to the Emperor that you are sincerely desirous to hold friendly relations with him."

"I should esteem myself happy to be allowed the opportunity of proving this," interposed Frederick William hastily.

"Excuse my bluntness, sir, but the Emperor in the greatness of his condescension has himself devised a sure means of restoring the most cordial relations between himself and the most favored of German princes. You see, your highness, that the Emperor loves you, for he has been pleased to offer you the hand of his beloved daughter, the Archduchess Anna Maria of Austria. He purposes to endow the archduchess so richly that your wealth shall be greater than that of any other sovereign in the empire. He desires to call you his son-in-law, and to give you honor and distinctions in the eyes of all Europe. Only say, most gracious sir, will you receive this confidential intimation favorably, and will you pay your addresses to the daughter of the Emperor?"

"Truly, count, you dazzle my eyes by giving me a glimpse of a future brilliant as the sun itself. The little Elector of Brandenburg become the son-in-law of the exalted, mighty Emperor of Germany—be raised by his lord's condescension to so prominent a position in the eyes of all Europe! I repeat it, count, my eyes are quite dazzled by the glorious prospect!"

"But does your grace accept my offer?"

"How can you ask such a question, count—as if any one could see the gates of paradise opened and refuse to enter in! Am I to be the Emperor's son-in-law, and husband to the most charming and richest of princesses! And will this Princess not merely make the sacrifice of deigning to bestow her hand upon me, but for my sake give up her religion and adopt that of my house?"

"What, your highness," asked the count, whose radiant face suddenly assumed an expression of gravity and horror, "can you suppose that the Archduchess Anna Maria could give up her religion?"

"Did you not say, count, that the Emperor would not reject my proposals for the hand of the Archduchess Anna Maria, but, on the other hand, would graciously accept me as his son-in-law?"

"Yes, your highness, I did say so, but——"

"Well, and was not that saying tacitly that the archduchess was ready to renounce her faith and adopt the Calvinist creed?"

"By no means," cried Count Trautmannsdorf, perfectly shocked. "The archduchess renounce the Holy Catholic religion and turn Calvinist! That is simply impossible!"

"Impossible, count?" asked the Elector, in unruffled tones. "Surely, if his Majesty has seriously entertained thoughts of forming such an alliance, small as the house of Brandenburg is, he can not have overlooked the existence of a family law, requiring the wife of the reigning head of the family to profess the religion of her husband. I may add that I am firmly convinced myself that there is no happy union where man and wife do not profess the same faith, and I have made up my mind never to wed a princess of a different creed

from my own. I hope, however, this will prove no obstacle to my marriage with the archduchess, and that the Princess will adopt the faith of my house and family."

"Indulge no such hopes, sir!" cried the count. "An archduchess of Austria can never forsake the religion of her fathers, and never would the Emperor give his consent to it. But if your highness insists upon that point, there is yet another means of bringing about a unity in religion. The archduchess is a Catholic, it is true, and a pious Catholic. How infinitely happy would it make her, and what a high proof of love would it be, if your highness should determine——"

"I hope," interrupted the Elector severely—"I hope you do not mean to propose that I should be the one to change my religion! No, I am convinced that you would not venture to propose such a thing to me! I tell you, that nothing in the world could induce me to change my religion."

"That is to say," sighed the count, "a union with the archduchess is impossible."

"If that is the case, count, I beg you not to forget that it is not I who makes it impossible," exclaimed the Elector, with warmth. "I should be happy to receive a wife at the Emperor's hands, only I must not be expected, in order to attain this happiness, to burden my conscience, and have cause to blush before God and my people. Tell the Emperor this. Tell his Majesty that I am deeply touched by the high honor so graciously destined for me, and that it is not my fault indeed if I am compelled to decline it. May the Emperor in his condescension make allowance for me, and not turn from me his favor. To this end intercede for me with the Emperor; and assure him, moreover, that I shall not take a wife from any house whose interests oppose those of his Majesty, but that I am most anxious to prove how dear to me are his approbation and favor. Have you anything further to say in the name of his Imperial Majesty?" *

"No, your highness; I have finished," said the count, sighing. "I have the honor of bidding your grace farewell, and requesting my dismissal."

"God be with you, Count Trautmannsdorf, and may your

* The Elector's own words. See Pöllnitz, Memoirs, vol. i. p. 44.

difficult task at Osnabrück and Münster not be dashed as suddenly as my prospects for the future, which in the beginning you painted so fair and left more dark than ever."

"Your highness, you blame me——"

"I blame nobody, and I hope that you do neither. Circumstances are stronger than the will of man. All this should teach us to be humble and adapt ourselves to circumstances. You are dismissed, count!"

He gave him a friendly nod, and looked after the silently retreating nobleman with an expressive smile, while with folded arms he stood thoughtfully in the center of the room.

"Rebuffed, completely rebuffed," said Burgsdorf, who had opened the door for the ambassador, but remained in the cabinet. "Gracious sir, I have only one regret to express at this moment."

"Well, and what is that, Burgsdorf?"

"Your highness, I regret that you are not my son, and that I may not address your grace just as a father might!"

"Truly you frighten me," exclaimed the Elector, laughing. "Just say at once, old Burgsdorf, that you would like to scold me now if I were your son. Methinks you are imperially minded, and think it abominable in me not to obey the Emperor's behests with all humility. You would like to scold me, would you not?"

"No, your highness, no indeed. I am not at all imperially disposed, and would say nothing harsh, but only what is affectionate and kind."

"What, for example? I give you permission to treat me as your son, and in some sense I am almost so. You used often to carry me in your arms when I was a child; taught me to handle a sword, to hunt and shoot. In all knightly exercises you were my instructor, generally a gentle and kind one, but at times strict and severe, as becomes a parent. Then for once let me consider myself as your son, and *you*, speak as if you were indeed my father."

"You grant me leave to do so then, your highness?"

"I beg you to, old father Burgsdorf."

"Well," cried Burgsdorf, rushing up to the Elector with outstretched arms, "let me embrace you, my son! I am proud

of you, you make me happy, and I prophecy for you a glorious future! For although you are young and passionate, yet you curb your spirit with the wisdom and moderation of a gray-beard. Although you thirst for glory and renown, yet your honor and independence are dearer to you than aught else, and you gave God the glory while you rejected the honor of becoming the Emperor's son-in-law."

"Thank you, father Burgsdorf, for it pleases me to call you by that name, and I trust that you will ever love me as your own son!"

"I have nothing in the world to love besides yourself, sir!" cried Burgsdorf, the tears streaming down his red cheeks. "I am separated from my shrewish wife and her daughter, and so it has come to pass that on you are concentrated my individual affections. Do not trample them under your feet, sir, despise not the offering of my heart."

"You see that I do not, old friend, for, what seldom happens, I have opened my heart to you and become tender. I entreat you therefore to act honorably and openly toward me, to stand by me as a father, and never to conceal your opinions from me."

"I promise you, sir, and now let me resume my rôle of office and ceremony. Most gracious sir, will you condescend to receive the French lord now?"

The Elector nodded a smiling assent, and Burgsdorf hastened to open the antechamber door.

V.—The French Ambassador.

"Let the Marquis d'Avaux, envoy of his Majesty the King of France enter," cried Burgsdorf in a loud voice, "his highness is ready to receive his excellency."

A gentleman of small, trim figure, in a sky-blue velvet coat, trimmed richly with gold lace, and a dress sword dangling at his side, entered the cabinet, pausing at the door to make three profoundly ceremonious bows. Then he slowly ad-

vanced until within a few steps of the Elector, when he again bowed so deeply that the long, fair ringlets encircling his head fell over and concealed his face.

"Marquis d'Avaux," said the Elector, "I am glad to see you once more, for you will know that the last time we met you thought that death was at my heels, and that I could not escape him."

"Yes indeed, your highness," replied the marquis. "I remember it very well. Our spies had informed me that your enemies in Poland had forged a plot against your grace, and hired murderers to fall upon you as you passed through the forest of Yablunka on your way to Warsaw. In my anxiety to protect your precious life, I traveled day and night, post-haste from Hamburg to Königsberg, to warn your highness of the evil impending, and to beg you to forego the perilous journey." *

"And yet I did undertake it, trusting in God and my own good cause," said the Elector, with beaming countenance, "and you see, marquis, this confidence was not misplaced. I am alive, and hope that a long life is still before me."

"A long and glorious life, your highness—a life that shall redound to the exaltation of your friends and the confusion of your foes! When, in spite of my well-founded warnings, I saw your grace, so firm and unmoved, setting out upon your perilous journey with such cheerful courage, it seemed to me as if for a moment the future were unveiled, and I could see the Elector of Brandenberg in prospective as a laurel-crowned hero, mighty and glorious. I then reported as the result of my observations to the court of Versailles: The young Elector will not, like his predecessors, be Poland's humble vassal and the devoted servant of the Emperor of Germany, but he will carve out his own career, and free himself from all bondage and subjection."

"I thank you for your good opinion," said the Elector, smiling. "But, alas! as yet your prophecies have not been fulfilled. I am still the vassal of Poland, and should I venture to set myself in opposition to the Emperor of Germany,

* See Droysen, History of Prussian Politics, vol. iii, part i, p. 245.

I would only ruin myself, and become the laughingstock of all Europe."

"No, gracious sir!" exclaimed the marquis eagerly—"no, it would make you the admiration of all Europe, and France would joyfully protect the bold, valiant young Prince, who dared openly oppose the grasping and domineering German Emperor."

"I hope you have not come to make me such a proposition," asked the Elector quickly. "I hope you do not imagine that I could be so forgetful of my station and my duty as not to show to the Emperor of Germany and the Holy Roman Empire that reverence and devotion which, as a German prince, I owe to the first of all the German princes?"

"Your highness, I would not venture to make such a proposition," replied the marquis, shrugging his shoulders. "I only cherish the conviction that, if the Elector of Brandenburg and Duke of Prussia would rise to distinction and power, he can not attain them with the consent and approval of the Emperor."

"And did you come from Hamburg merely to tell me this?"

"No, your highness; I was sent from Hamburg to Münster, there to represent the crown of France in the congress of warlike powers. Thence, however, I have betaken myself hither, to pay my respects to your highness, in the name of his eminence, Cardinal Mazarin, and to convey to you assurances of his eminence's highest sympathy and admiration. With the greatest satisfaction has his excellency read the communication your grace addressed to the King of France upon the announcement of his having attained the years of majority."

"Ah!" cried the Elector, smiling, "young King Louis XIV then still allows Cardinal Mazarin to read letters addressed to himself."

"The King has such perfect confidence in the zeal and capacity of the cardinal that he begins nothing without his advice and assistance, and has made no alteration in the conduct of affairs."

"That is to say, Cardinal Mazarin remains Regent of

France! I thank you, marquis, for this notification. Will you now tell me why his excellency was so well pleased with my letter to the King of France?"

"Your highness, if such is your command I will tell you, although I am convinced that you know very well already."

"Well, I rather think his eminence was pleased by my applying to the King of France a title which the German Electors are usually accustomed to bestow only upon the head of the German Empire, the Emperor of Germany. I addressed him as his Majesty!"

"Yes, your highness did grant the King of France this title of honor. Both the King and cardinal were highly gratified by this, and made most anxious to testify their gratitude to your highness, and prove the sympathy which they feel for the house of Brandenburg."

"It is very pleasant to me to hear this, especially since an opportunity presents itself at this very time for giving me such a proof of sympathy. My representative at Münster complains greatly of the haughtiness of the other delegates both there and at Osnabrück, reporting that no one gives him the honor and title which he dutifully bestows upon each of them. The French ambassador, Baron Servien, has not been more complaisant than the rest of the body."

"Your highness, I am empowered to instruct Baron Servien as to his course, and to be his coadjutor, and I promise that your Electoral Highness's ambassador shall have no further cause to complain of the affection and good will of France. It very nearly concerns France that your grace should be convinced of her friendship and desire to form a closer alliance with Brandenburg. Nothing would be more pleasant to his eminence than to have your highness give him the assurance that the report of your intended union with the Queen of Sweden is unfounded, because such an union would be incompatible with your peace and safety."

"In what respect, marquis?"

"Your highness, such an aggrandizement of the Elector of Brandenburg would fill all the other German princes with envy and suspicion, and would even affect the balance of power in Europe."

"And you think only the German princes would look with unfavorable eyes upon my marriage with the Queen of Sweden?" asked the Elector with a significant smile.

"The maritime powers, too, would certainly look with suspicion and envy upon the young King of Sweden, who would be as well Duke of Pomerania and Prussia and master of the Baltic."

"And France, marquis?"

"France belongs not to the maritime powers, your highness; and if she cherishes the ardent wish that your grace should not marry the Queen of Sweden, it results from the admiration and friendship entertained for you by both the King of France and Cardinal Marazin, an admiration which urges them to use every exertion to bind your grace lastingly to France. France also has the disposal of the hand of a young, wealthy, and beautiful Princess, and would gladly bestow it upon the Elector of Brandenburg. Duke Gaston of Orleans, uncle to my Sovereign, has a daughter, and although she has been courted and sought after by many Spanish and Italian princes, the cardinal would prefer you to any other suitor whatever. This is what his eminence bade me say to you in strictest confidence, hoping that you would see fit to comply with his desires."

"You indeed surprise me," said the Elector. "Forgive my candor in admitting that up to this time I have never thought of this Princess, and barely heard her name mentioned."

"Your highness, what higher eulogium could you pass upon the Princess of Orleans. She is young and beautiful, of a royal house, cousin to the King of France, and richly endowed with worldly goods. She lives at the most magnificent court of Europe, and no one has been able to say a word against her. Busy fame has not dared to lift her eye to the noble, princely maiden, who shrinks in modesty and bashfulness from the gaze of the multitude, and only displays her charms in the narrow circle of her own family and court."

"Truly, marquis, you speak of a miracle of maidenly beauty, and I regret that I can not have the happiness of beholding the face of this most charming princess."

"Permit me, your highness, to show you the portrait of the Princess of Orleans," said the marquis joyfully. He drew from his vest pocket a red case, which he opened, drawing out quite a large medallion.

"Your highness," said he, handing this to the Elector, "behold the well-executed miniature likeness of Princess Louise of Orleans."

The Elector took it and examined it long and attentively. "Truly," exclaimed he then, "this is a Princess of uncommon beauty and attractions. Happy the man who can woo and win this paragon of her sex."

"Your highness," whispered the marquis, "it depends only upon yourself whether or not you are the recipient of this happiness. Cardinal Mazarin begs you, if the portrait of the Princess pleases you, to accept it as a little present from himself, and to make him one in return."

"What sort of one, marquis?"

"His excellency hopes that you will send him a faithful likeness of yourself, that he may show it to the Princess of Orleans." *

"That the Princess may despise me, and laugh at the ugly little Elector of Brandenburg? No, no, Sir Marquis, I shall not expose myself to such a risk, and send my portrait to a lady by whom I am convinced beforehand I should be scorned. You exhibit to me the likeness of an angel, a lovely fairy, and could I be so presumptuous as to esteem it possible that this fairy could condescend to become the wife of a wretched little mortal, who lives like a country squire in his sandy Mark, and could offer this petted fairy Princess from the luxurious court of France no home befitting her beauty or her station."

"Your grace then declines granting the cardinal's request, and will not send him your portrait?"

"To Cardinal Mazarin, with pleasure, as soon as I can find an artist capable of executing it. Hitherto no artist has arisen in my poor domains, and we have not even been able to retain those who have visited us from foreign lands. I hope, though, that it will be different hereafter, and I shall have my picture painted by the first skillful artist who may appear, and send

* Historical. *Vide* Droysen, History of Prussian Politics, p. 265.

it to Cardinal Mazarin. But mind, it must not be transferred to the fair Princess of Orleans, for, I repeat, I could never venture to woo so incomparable a beauty! Say so to Cardinal Mazarin. I am not so presumptuous as to lift my eyes to an object which I know to be wholly unattainable by me. However, I thank his eminence for having given me the privilege of beholding such a miracle of beauty. It is at once the image of a perfect fairy and a masterpiece of art."

"Ah! it is plain to see that your highness is a connoisseur. This picture was painted by the distinguished portrait painter Mignard."

"It is wonderful, marquis! I dare not contemplate it longer lest I should be perfectly intoxicated by its beauty. Marquis, take the portrait and return it to his eminence."

"Your highness, you reject the portrait? You send it back?"

"Marquis, this likeness is too fascinating—its setting too magnificent. For see, it is set in a double row of the richest diamonds. It is a present fit only for a King, and too handsome for my acceptance."

"Your highness, Cardinal Mazarin will be sorely chagrined if you do not accept his portrait at least."

"What say you, *his* portrait?"

"Permit me to explain myself, most noble sir," replied the marquis, taking up in his hand the miniature, which the Elector had laid on the table at his side. He touched a little spring on the upper side of the medallion. The Princess's portrait sprang back like the door of a clock, and now the marquis again presented the medallion to the Elector.

"Ha, just see!" exclaimed Frederick William, with animation. "The portrait of a man—a Prince of the Church!"

"The portrait of Cardinal Mazarin!"

"What a noble head!" said the Elector, examining the picture. "How finely cut and marked these features, and what an unfathomable depth in those large black eyes! Ah! in looking upon this face it is not difficult to comprehend how he has become not only the master and ruler of France, but also of women's hearts."

"Your highness, Cardinal Mazarin is ambitious of holding

some small place in the heart of men as well, especially in your heart, your highness. He trusts that you will at least occasionally bestow a favorable glance upon his likeness, and remember that it portrays the features of one who cherishes the warmest admiration for you, and has no more lively desire than to prove his devotion to your excellency by deeds."

"Tell the cardinal," replied Frederick William, "that I am happy to possess the faithful portrait of a statesman whom I consider my preceptor in the difficult arts of politics and diplomacy, and from whom I have learned more than from his renowned predecessor Cardinal Richelieu. He gave to France the glory as well as the evils of war, he gained battles and won laurels for himself; but Mazarin practiced the more difficult art of self-control. He even submitted to humiliations in order to secure to France the peace she so much needed, he renounced his own glory for the sake of the nation, and through policy has become the hero of peace. Happy was it for me that not Richelieu but Mazarin wielded the helm of State when I entered upon my sovereignty. By the one I should have been led away to grasp the sword, and side with one of the contending parties, which surely would have been to my destruction. By the other I have been taught the wisdom of prudence and self-restraint, and I believe this has been most beneficial for me. Tell the cardinal this, and thank him for his welcome portrait. Say, moreover, that I shall take good heed to keep the lid closed, and refrain from gazing upon the lovely female face smiling upon me from that side."

"And I can assure your highness, on the cardinal's behalf, that he will await with impatience the fulfilment of your promise to send him your likeness, which he ardently desires to own."

"Present my most profound respects to his eminence. And hark ye, marquis, when you reach Münster be mindful of your promise to me! Remind the members of the council that they have been deputed by their sovereigns to bring about the peace for which all Europe languishes, and that it behooves them, above all things, to cultivate friendly dispositions

among themselves, and do all to promote reconciliation instead of interposing obstacles in its way!"

"Most gracious sir, I shall lay this wise admonition to my own heart, as well as endeavor to impress it upon the other gentlemen. It was your grace who in the Diet at Frankfort made the proposition of calling a council of all the contending powers at Münster and Osnabrück, to pave the way for peace and settle all matters of dispute. To you will belong the praise and gratitude of all Europe if the difficult task succeeds. I thank your highness for my courteous reception, and beg to be dismissed."

"Go, marquis, and may God be with you in your difficult undertaking. Tell Cardinal Mazarin that when you left me I was again absorbed in the contemplation of his likeness!"

And the Elector smilingly lifted the medallion from the table, and gazed fixedly upon it. As soon, however, as the gentle closing of the door warned him that the ambassador had departed, he closed the covering of that portrait, and fixed his eyes upon the outside of the medallion, which contained the likeness of the Princess Louise of Orleans set in two rows of costly diamonds.

A gentle rustling behind him interrupted his observations, and quickly lifting up his head and looking round, he saw behind him the Lord High Chancellor von Burgsdorf, who was standing on tiptoe, and with outstretched neck trying to look over his lord's shoulder and catch a glimpse of the medallion.

"Only see how curious the lord high chamberlain is!" said the Elector, smiling.

"Most gracious sir, I beg pardon. I have never, though, seen a fairy, and your rapturous enthusiasm fired the heart of even such an old fellow as myself. Be pleased then to vouchsafe me a sight of this enchanting woman, this angel, this fairy!"

"Well, look at it, old friend!" cried the Elector, laughing, "but take care not to fall in love with it."

He handed Burgsdorf the medallion, who took it eagerly to inspect with impatient curiosity.

"Zounds!" cried he, with an expression of dismay, almost letting the medallion slip from his grasp.

"Well, what is the matter," asked Frederick William, smiling, "and what means such roughness of speech in my presence?"

"Forgive me, your highness; in my surprise I forgot myself; for, expecting to see an extraordinary beauty, I was perfectly shocked when, instead of that, I thought I saw the image of a goose."

"Weigh well your words, chamberlain, and do not forget that you are speaking of a royal Princess! But your comparison is not wholly misplaced. Those sleepy, little eyes, that low forehead, that projecting mouth with those vermilion lips—well, yes, your comparison is not bad."

"And that is what your highness styled an angel, a charming fairy! Truly, although young in years, you are already a most wise and astute politician, and I, although old in years, am nothing but a stupid, ignorant old fellow! Your grace wished to decline the fine French alliance and therefore——"

"Yes, and therefore I represented myself as so charmed by it! But only confess, old man, the medallion has its great charms and is enough to inflame a poor human heart."

"Yes, gracious sir," said Burgsdorf, smiling, "I admit that! The diamonds are fine!"

"More than that, they are exquisite. Let us see. There are twenty-four diamonds, all of equal size and purity. The diamond ring which my mother gave me as a parting gift when I went to The Hague contained only one diamond, and that one not quite so large as this one. When I was in great pecuniary embarrassment I sold it to a Jew at Amsterdam for five hundred ducats. Oh, I remember yet very well, the Jew's name was Abraham, and he lived on the Strand, No. 14."

"Five hundred ducats!" exclaimed Burgsdorf, quite astonished. "This medallion, then, must be worth twenty-four times five hundred ducats!"

"Yes, twelve thousand ducats!" smiled the Elector. "The cardinal seems to wish to subsidize me without putting me

under the necessity of making acknowledgments. Only see, Burgsdorf, how these brilliants sparkle!"

"Wonderfully, sir; you see all colors reflected there!"

"Yes; now it emits red rays and now blue, and besides them see the bright gold epaulets!"

"What, most gracious sir! You see gold epaulets in precious stones!"

"More than that, I see a whole company of splendidly equipped troopers reflected there!"

"What can you mean, sir? I see nothing of that."

"Ah! Can I be gifted with double sight? Well, no matter; we can not occupy ourselves with such play, for we have no time for it indeed. We shall deposit this glorious medallion with its two portraits in the strong box of my writing table, and there may it rest securely until the time comes when I may need it. And now, let us talk of business again. Did you not recently visit at Köslin my widowed aunt, the Queen of Sweden?"

"Yes, gracious sir. You yourself bade me go and congratulate the Queen on her fortunate arrival, after her stay in Denmark, and promise her Majesty a speedy visit from my gracious lord."

"And had you nothing more to say to the Queen, Burgsdorf?"

"No, certainly not, your highness," said Burgsdorf with an appearance of perfect innocence. "Your highness gave me no further commands."

"But my mother? Now, just see, the old sinner has as smooth a countenance as if he were not uttering a falsehood."

"Gracious sir, I have uttered no falsehood; I have only concealed something, and that merely because I had given the Electress a solemn promise to that effect."

"Ah, you acknowledge then that there was something to conceal, and that my mother intrusted you with some errands for the Queen."

"Yes, gracious sir, I acknowledge it," muttered Burgsdorf, quite confounded. "But I promised to betray nothing of this to your grace."

"Never mind that, old man; you can betray nothing which I do not know. Women are talkative even though they be princesses, and you may learn from this not to have secrets and intrigues with them! My mother told me everything this morning before she set out. She commissioned you to inform the Queen that she still cherished a lively desire to consummate the union between their two children, projected by the great King. The message ran so, did it not?"

"Yes, gracious sir, it is your mother's earnest wish that her noble son Frederick William should become the husband of the Swedish Queen, and she believes you cherish the same desire; only you are too proud to woo directly, unless you were certain that your addresses would be favorably received. Therefore she requested the widowed Queen to write to her daughter, urging her to declare explicitly whether she were willing to accept your grace's hand."

"And my royal aunt was so kind as to reciprocate my mother's sentiments, was she not? And so eloquently did you plead your cause that the Queen supposed your pen must be as ready as your tongue. She therefore desired you to indite a letter in her name in which her daughter, the reigning Queen, was urgently solicited to relieve me from this state of painful uncertainty, and to say so if she would accept my proposals, and if not, by a decided no deprive me of all hope. Was not this so, Burgsdorf?"

"Yes, gracious sir, this was the tenor of the letter, which I composed for the widowed Queen, and she afterward copied." *

"And you sent the letter direct to Queen Christina, did you?"

"Yes, gracious sir; direct by the packet ship, which sails every week from Stettin. The Queen herself wrote the address, sealed it with her seal, and wrote upon the back, moreover: 'From the widowed Queen of Sweden. To be handed to Queen Christina herself.'"

"And you, simple-hearted man, actually believe that this letter reached Queen Christina?"

* Historical. *Vide* Droysen, vol. iii, p. 255.

"The widowed Queen was convinced of this, your highness."

"Well, I am convinced to the contrary, or, rather, I know certainly that Chancellor Oxenstiern intercepted and suppressed the entire communication. But hark, old friend, I am in truth a little concerned to have this matter definitely decided. Therefore, since the letter you wrote never reached the Queen, I think it better to send her a living epistle, which Oxenstiern can not so easily suppress."

"A living epistle, your highness? I do not catch your meaning."

"And I aver that old Burgsdorf is a stupid old fellow! When I say a living epistle, I mean that I purpose to send a messenger to Queen Christina to repeat to her the contents of the lost letter."

"Ah! I begin to understand now!" cried Burgsdorf, striking his fat red hand against his forehead.

"A happy circumstance," said the Elector, smiling; "for you are the very person I mean to send to Stockholm! Undoubtedly you remember the contents of that letter?"

"Ah, your grace, I should suppose so, when I spent two days and nights in its composition, and turned over every clause of the letter so many times in my head that each word is indelibly imprinted upon my memory, and I could declaim it in the night as a comedian his role."

"Well, go, old man, and declaim your letter before the young Queen. But not like a parrot blurting out his whole part at once, but like an artist, rightly intoning every word, making the proper pauses, and making his discourse impressive by the graces of sentiment and elocution. Yes, I shall send you to Queen Christina at Stockholm, but you must go as the widowed Queen's messenger, and repeat to the daughter what you previously wrote to her in the mother's name. Act as her mother's agent, but keep your eyes and ears open to hear and see all that might be of interest and importance to your Elector. But make it your first business to observe Queen Christina herself narrowly, and as far as you can, bring me a faithful portraiture of her character and disposition."

"Shall I speak to her in your name, gracious sir?

Shall I tell the young Queen how devoutedly you love her, how you are consumed by love for her, and can no longer find rest day or night?"

"I positively forbid you to speak such follies. You are only to speak in the Queen mother's name, never directly in mine; but the mother may properly tell her daughter of my love. I have nothing to say against it, only, all must be within the bounds of moderation and reason. I charge you to say nothing derogatory to my dignity, always remembering that I am the man, and consequently the head, even though my wife should be an empress or queen. Thus you are to represent the Elector Frederick William to Queen Christina! Not as an inferior, who will be perfectly overwhelmed by the honor of obtaining her hand, but as an equal, who with the consent of his own free will woos the Queen, with the hope of making her happy, while expecting to receive the same blessing at her hands."

"Alas! most gracious sir," sighed Burgsdorf, "they say that Queen Christina is very proud and domineering."

"Ascertain for yourself if this is so, Burgsdorf, and give me the result of your observations with perfect sincerity; for I would not have a domineering wife, who would expect me to be obedient and submissive to her—no, not if she brought with her as her dowry the greatest kingdom upon earth! Learn, further, that I am not disposed to be known as the husband of the Queen of Sweden, but wish to make the Queen of Sweden the wife of the Elector of Brandenburg. Will you take note of this, Burgsdorf?"

"I will take note of it and act accordingly, most gracious sir."

"Well, then, make all needful preparations for your journey. You must set out to-morrow at the earliest dawn, and come to me this evening to receive my last instructions. You will, of course, travel under an assumed name, for it is everywhere known that old Conrad von Burgsdorf is my lord high chancellor, and Queen Christina would know directly that I had sent you. I shall expect you this evening, Burgsdorf."

VI.—The Last Farewell.

The eight days' respite demanded by Gabriel Nietzel had expired. The shades of night were falling, the last night which the father and son were to pass together. Gabriel had spent the whole day in lonely solitude in the gloomy, unfurnished room which he had rented for himself and his son in a wretched hut of the suburbs. In vain had the child run in from the street at intervals to beg "uncle" to let him stay with him; this uncle had invariably bidden him go back and play with the other boys, and not trouble himself about his silence and dejection. But now that evening had come, the boy, with determined looks and almost defiant air, re-entered the chamber, where Gabriel had been sitting at the window, with folded hands and tearful eyes, watching his son playing in the street, and listening to the lively tones of his voice which sounded with angelic sweetness in his ears.

"I am going to stay here now, Claus," said the boy positively. "I am not going with those wild boys any more, but mean to stay with *you,* uncle! You shall not drive me away, as if I were a dog!"

"I have no wish to do so, Raphael," replied Gabriel, with a melancholy smile. "If you had not come I should have called you, for we are to take a walk together."

"Oh, that is fine—that is splendid!" cried the boy. "I am so glad, Uncle Claus. You always tell me such pretty stories in our walks, and show me so many pretty things. Let us take a long, long walk as we did when we came here."

"Where would you like to go, Raphael?" asked Gabriel, rising from his seat, and drawing the hood of his gown over his head.

"I would like to go to the same place I came from," said the boy warmly.

"To Venice?"

"Yes, yes, to Venice," cried the boy, with vehemence. "Why did you take me away, Claus? It was so pleasant there—so warm and lively in the streets, so much beautiful green

water everywhere, so many handsome houses, and such a bright blue sky above. Why did you not leave me there with my grandfather?"

"You have forgotten, Raphael, your grandfather was dead; you were there alone!"

"Dead!" cried the boy, with tremulous, tearful voice. "You always say that when people go away and leave their children alone. My father and mother are dead, too, but I do not believe it, old Claus. You only say so because you do not like me to know that my parents were bad, and went away from their poor little one and would have nothing to do with him. The boys in the street say this is the way of it, and they laugh and jeer at me because I have no parents, and do not even know who they were."

"The boys shall not tease you or laugh at you again, Raphael," said Gabriel quickly. "You shall learn this evening who your parents were. Come, give me your hand; let us be going."

"Where are we going, Claus?"

"To a place where I will tell you about your mother. Look once more around the room, Raphael, right slowly, that a little of your looks may be left behind."

The boy laughed, and the silvery ring of this childish laugh sounded strange in that bare and sordid room.

"How foolish you are to-day, Claus!" said the boy. "My eyes are not like those of the prince in the fairy tale, that turned everything to gold upon which they rested."

"Never mind, Raphael. They are like stars to me, and whatever they have shone upon will look brighter forever in my eyes! One thing more I have to ask of you. Come here to my bed."

He led him into the darker corner of the chamber, where in a wretched press bed lay some straw, covered with a black woolen spread.

"Kneel down, Raphael," said Claus, with gentle voice —"kneel down and lay your hand upon this couch, where you have so often heard me sigh and moan during these last nights."

The boy did as he was bid. He knelt down by the bed-

side and laid both hands upon the coarse canvas pillow stuffed with straw.

"Now say 'Good by, poor old Claus! May God bless you and forgive your sins!'"

The boy repeated the words in his silvery clear voice; as if impelled by an instinct of love he leaned forward and pressed a kiss upon this pillow, which had been wet with so many tears and warmed by so many sighs.

"Love me, good Claus!" cried the child, "and every evening when you go to bed feel the kiss I have given your pillow."

Gabriel sank down beside him, and with a loud sob joined his hands above his head. "Oh, it is *her* spirit that lives in him, *her* heart that speaks through him," he murmured, while the tears rolled down his cheeks. Then he started up, and gently drew the boy toward him.

"Let us go now," he said, forcing his voice to be firm and composed. "You have now taken your last farewell of this chamber, and never shall return here again."

He flung his arm around the boy's neck, and drew him to the street door, which he opened.

"Raphael," he said solemnly, "with the first step you take across this threshold, you enter upon a new life. May God bless you and the holy spirit of your mother attend you! Give me your hand now and let us go!"

"Where are we going?" asked the boy again, as, holding Gabriel's hand, he stepped out upon the street.

"I will tell you when we get there, meanwhile let us go along in silence."

The child obeyed, clinging more closely to Gabriel, while he gave himself up to his guidance. Thus they passed rapidly and noiselessly through the deserted streets, until beyond the castle moat they reached the Willow-bank suburb, which was a mere marshy waste.

"Where are we going?" asked the boy for the third time.

"Raphael, we are going where I saw your mother for the last time," replied Gabriel, with solemn voice, continuing to move forward.

They had now passed through the suburb, crossed the

Spree bridge, and through the solitary Willow-bank Gate came out into the open country.

The moon, shining with golden splendor, seemed to irradiate with almost daylight brightness the broad expanse of sandy plain stretching out before them; winding along in the midst of it an avenue of weeping willows marked the road leading to the fortress of Spandow. The deep-blue heavens were sprinkled with stars, which with their glory made the whole horizon seem like a canopy studded with sparkling gems, stretched by the hand of God above the earth, man's throne.

But upon this throne and beneath this heavenly canopy knelt in the silence of night a poor, heart-broken man, wringing his hands, and lifting his tear-dimmed eyes to heaven with a look of intense longing, as if among these myriads of stars and roving planets he sought for the one only star that could brighten his night and bring peace to his troubled spirit. Beside him stood the boy, sometimes looking with bewilderment upon the kneeling figure at his side and sometimes up to the glorious sky, and a blissful smile lighted up his lovely childish countenance, for it seemed to him as if the man in the moon were looking kindly down upon him, and smiling upon him with his broad, golden face.

But the sobs and groans of his friend recalled the boy's thoughts to earth. He bent over him and tenderly threw his arms around Gabriel's neck.

"Dear, good Claus," he whispered coaxingly, "do tell me why you cry so much?"

"I will tell you, Raphael!" cried Claus, with a loud and solemn voice. "Cast yourself upon your knees and kiss the ground on which you stand. This is the spot where your mother blessed you for the last time. Here she stood when for the last time she pressed a kiss upon your lips, and then laid you in my arms. Here I was forced to swear a solemn oath to her, that I would go away with you, while she returned to that dreadful city, which she well knew would prove to be her tomb."

"And why did you let her go back to the city?" asked the boy impatiently. "Why did you not take my dear mother away with you?"

"She would not come with us," sighed Gabriel. "She was a heroine, or, if you will, a saint; danger affrighted not the heroine, because the saint must atone for a crime—blot out an evil deed by an act of love. Oh, my child, my beloved child—for in this hour I may call you so, although I am not your father—my beloved child, while you live, never forget your noble, virtuous, and beautiful mother. Swear to me that you will cherish her memory; that you will call upon her when you are in want and danger; that you will pray to her when sin entices you and crime would draw you into her nets. Swear to me that in all the great moments of your life you will look up to heaven, and call upon your mother to be near and help you!"

"I swear to do so, father Claus," said the boy with low, clear voice. "But will my mother hear me?—will she take notice of the poor little boy whom she forsook? Ah, Claus, you say my mother loved me a great deal. But how could a mother forsake her child if she loved him?"

"Because she loved you, Raphael, she left you. It is written, 'the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children,' and that this curse might not fall upon your head, as well as to atone for the crime of the unworthy being whom she loved, she turned from you and offered herself a cheerful sacrifice to death. Oh, it is a long, sad story, and you would not understand it if I were to tell it to you—a story of blood and tears, a story full of rapture and despair, full of hatred and of love. If you were a man I would tell it to you, and you would tear your hair and beat upon your breast for anguish and despair. But you are still a child, barely ten years old, and you would not understand the fearful circumstances which induced your noble mother, here upon this very spot, to part with you and bid an eternal farewell to her darling child. Seven years have gone by since then, seven long, dreadful years, which sometimes seem to me like an eternity and sometimes only a minute; like a dream they have flitted by, and through the mist, I discern your mother's lofty, striking form. There she stands, proud and dignified as a queen, yet modest and gentle as a maid. There she stands, wholly enveloped in a mantle of light, her eyes sparkling like

heavenly stars, her smile radiant as moonlight, and all about her is sunshine, peace, and a heavenly transfiguration. I see you, Rebecca. You hover near me in the night wind—you stretch out your arms to me and your child! Oh, take us with you, draw us up to yourself in your land of immortal joy and peace!"

Carried away by inspiration he spread out his arms in the direction of the wind, which, sighing and moaning, swept across the plain, and made the boy shudder with fright.

"Claus, let us go away," he murmured, nestling closer to his side; "it is so sad here. Surely spirits must be abroad, and are holding their revels here in the moonshine."

"Do not be afraid, Raphael," sighed Gabriel, relapsing from his state of rhapsody. "Do not be afraid; it is nothing but the ghosts of memory which haunt the spot, and fill my heart with awe as I listen to their mournful dirges. Raphael, I see your mother, standing before me as of yore. She fixes her large eyes upon me, speaks to me with her impressive voice, and commands me to introduce the child of her grief and love to the world and life, and not to shut him up to poverty and degradation; she commands me to perform my last act of penance, to renounce you. And I obey her orders. I tear myself away from you. Raphael, to-night I speak with you for the last time—to-night I take a lifelong farewell of you!"

"Oh, uncle, dear uncle, why so?" asked the boy, breaking out into loud weeping. "Why do you not keep me with you? I will beg with you, weep with you, suffer hunger and thirst with you. I love you so much, Claus, so very much. Do not drive me away from you, keep me with you!"

"You love me, my child?" exclaimed Gabriel joyfully. "Oh, say it once again. Is it actually true that you love me?"

"Yes, I love you, and I want to stay with you."

"Bless you for those words, son of your mother!" cried Gabriel, clasping the boy firmly in his arms. "Those words were your parting gift, my son, and I shall treasure them in my heart and soul as long as I live, as long as I continue to drag out the weary chain of existence. But this night rends

the cords of love which bound you to me, and closes all connection between you and me. If you meet me to-morrow you must not greet the beggar who humbly creeps along at your side, but turn another way, and proudly pass him by."

"No, uncle, I can not and will not do that!" cried the boy. "What a bad boy I would be if I pretended not to know you, who have been so good and kind to me; the only person who received and cared for the solitary neglected boy! Oh, you think I have forgotten that time when you came to me in Venice. I was quite alone in the world, and there was no one to pity the poor little beggar, who had to beg his bread from door to door, thankful for a morsel bestowed upon him in charity. But you took me, poor child that I was, in your arms, fondled and wept over me. Your tears fell hot upon my forehead, and did me good. Your arms held me so tenderly and I felt so warm and happy, I shall never forget it! I remember very well, Claus, that for many weeks before I had had no sleeping place but a dark corner of the street, no pillow but the stone steps of a house; and when you took me in your arms I felt that I had now found a warm and soft place to rest my head, and I was happy, so happy, that to try my new resting place, I fell asleep. And now, you dear, bad Claus, you would have me be an ungrateful fellow, although you have always taught me that ingratitude was base! Now you would have me pass you as if I did not know you, when you have always told me we ought to be true to our friends, and never forget those who have done us a kindness. You have done so much for me Claus, and been just like a father to me! And I tell you, if you *will* send me away and have nothing to do with me, send me so far away that I will never meet you, for if I should see you I could not help falling on your neck, and rejoicing that I had once more found my dear Uncle Claus!"

"I charge you to do no such thing, Raphael," said Gabriel, and in spite of himself his voice was soft and tender. "It is the last command I shall give you: never try to speak to or accost me. To-night we part forever. Be happy, my child; your mother's blessing rest upon you, and make you a good and virtuous man! Once more I repeat it: Think always of

your mother! Honor her in every woman you come in contact with in after years; you do not understand my meaning now, but charge your memory with the words, and by and by you will understand them."

"I will do so, Claus," sighed the child, wiping the tears from his eyes with the back of his hand. "But you are always talking about my mother. You always say I must love and honor her, and say nothing about my father. Must I not love and honor him, too?"

Gabriel shrank back, and a shudder passed over his frame. "No," he murmured—"no, you must neither think of him nor love him."

"I shall, though!" cried the boy. "I shall love my father just as much as my mother! Tell me now, Claus, what my father's name was, and what he did that you always speak so bitterly of him?"

"Do not ask, child, do not ask!" groaned Gabriel. "I can not tell you your father's name, for he abjured it. I can not tell you what he did. He was a great criminal, and if he were yet alive his life could be only one prolonged act of penance."

"Poor father! I love him, nevertheless, and shall always pray for him," whispered the boy, sleepily and wearily nestling close up to Gabriel.

"Pray for him, yes, pray for him," said Gabriel, his voice choked with tears, and pressing the boy nearer to his heart.

"Let us go home," begged Raphael. "I am so tired, I want to go to bed."

"My child, to-night you have no bed or home," said Gabriel softly. "I will be your home and my heart your bed this last night that we are to spend together. To-morrow I shall conduct you to a noble prince, dwelling in a stately palace; but I would have you ever remember that before you went there you had been in a grander palace, and under the protection of the mightiest of princes. Look around you, Raphael; no princely palace is so spacious as these plains, no vaulted ceiling ever equaled in grandeur the moonlit splendor of this starry sky. Here we are in the house of the mightiest of princes, for we are in the house of God! He

is with us at this moment, he spreads his canopy above us, and looks down upon us in his stars. Feel his breath in the rustling night wind, behold the reflection of his face in the arched firmament above us!"

The boy made no answer. He only clung closer to Gabriel, who had allowed him gently to sink upon the earth, on the very spot where he had taken his last farewell of Rebecca.

The boy's head rested upon Gabriel's left arm, his countenance was turned toward heaven, and his grave expressive eyes—Rebecca's eyes—looked with dreamy blissful glances up at the glittering stars, which in solemn repose looked down from above.

But Gabriel lifted not his glance on high; he only gazed upon his child, whom he now for the last time held in his arms, and from whom, this hallowed night, he was to take a lifelong farewell. Now the child's dreamy glances dropped from heaven to the contemplation of Gabriel's face. The eyes of father and son met in a long look of fond affection. The moon looked down upon both, and alone saw the tears which stood in Gabriel's eye and the smile playing about the lips of his child.

Gradually the lids closed over the boy's eyes, once more with a last effort he opened them, looked up into Gabriel's face, and higher up at the glorious stars, then they shut wearily, and with an infinite feeling of contentment the boy stretched himself out upon the bed that he had found in his father's arms.

Quiet was round about, all nature slumbered in repose. Only occasionally was heard afar off the barking of a dog, to which a faint echo gave response. Once a night bird flew past, with hoarse croaking, making a dark streak across the sky, which Gabriel seemed to see long after the dismal bird had disappeared. Then again all was still, and the twinkling stars and silver moonlight illuminated the broad white sandy plain and the dark group in its center—the father holding his child in his arms!

The boy slept, but still occasionally raised his eyelids, as if to see whether his father's loving, affectionate face, and the blue, shining heavens were still there, and then he closed

them again and smiled, as children smile when they see angels in their dreams. It was a beautiful, holy night, and a breath of its eternal peace sank into the soul of the poor, afflicted father, and a glimpse of its infinite glory penetrated deeply the heart and memory of the boy! Often hereafter will thoughts of this night visit both; often in hours of grief will the man's soul be strengthened by this sacred remembrance; often will to-night's stars shine in the boy's heart, smiling upon him with his mother's eyes!

And the boy will become a youth, and the memory of his sorrowful childhood and the poor, broken-hearted man who now holds him in his arms be obliterated before brighter images of the present; but the memory of this starry night will live fresh and radiant in his heart, and never will his eye be uplifted to heaven at night that the stars of this night and his mother's love will not spring up anew within him.

The sun was quite high in the heavens when Gabriel bent down over the boy and awoke him with a kiss. It was the first time since they had lived together that Claus had permitted himself to indulge in this demonstration of tenderness, so that in spite of his sleepiness Raphael looked at him in amazement.

"Come now, my child," said Gabriel softly; "the first morning of your new life has dawned, and you must begin it with love and joy. I have waked you to this new life with a kiss, and when death shall one day call you to a yet higher sphere, may lips as tender as mine bestow upon you a parting benediction! And now let us go, Raphael. We are expected."

"*We expected,* Claus?"

"Hush! ask no questions—you will know all soon enough. Come!"

"But I am hungry, Claus. Why do you give me no warm milk and bread this morning? Claus, I am hungry."

"You will have plenty to eat at the place we are going to. You will never be hungry again—you will never know want again, Raphael. And now, speak not another word! Let us go along in silence, and if you choose pray in your heart."

"Give me your hand, Claus, and let us go."

"No; walk by yourself, only at my side. Do not catch hold of my hand—do not touch me! It hurts me. Henceforth each of us must go alone, and if we meet to-morrow we meet as strangers."

He struck into the path leading to the city, and the boy trotted along at his side, with serious, almost melancholy looks.

VII.—Elector and Beggar.

The Elector was in his sitting room. It was still early in the morning, and Frederick William gave himself up to the quiet enjoyment of his breakfast, which consisted of a bowl of highly seasoned soup, such as long years ago constituted the ordinary morning meal at the Electoral court. Frederick William, however, was thoughtful and absent-minded, for often, as he carried to his mouth the silver spoon, filled with steaming soup, his glance flew across to the great wall clock hanging beside the door, which, in its long, narrow ebony case, was not exactly fitted to enliven the low, gloomy room with its faded furniture. Just now a small door above the dial plate opened with a whirring sound. A cock of tolerably artistic workmanship, with colored plumage, stepped briskly out, opened his beak to crow at little intervals with loud, shrill voice, and then swiftly vanished, as he came, through the trap door.

"Eight o'clock!" said the Elector, who had now finished his breakfast and stood up. "Eight o'clock! I am curious to know if Gabriel Nietzel will keep——"

"Gracious sir," broke in Chamberlain Kunkel, who now approached from the lesser antechamber, "the beggar who was here some weeks since has come again; he says your highness gave him an appointment at this time!"

"He speaks the truth. Admit him. He has a boy with him, has he not?"

"Yes, gracious sir, a boy of about ten years of age, an

angel of beauty! Pardon me, your highness, for saying so, but I have never in my life seen so beautiful a child."

"He must indeed be truly beautiful, since he has attracted the attention of so devoted an alchemist as yourself, Kunkel, who have no eyes for anything but crucibles and phials. But time presses—bring in the beggar, Kunkel."

"With the boy, your highness?"

"As the man himself may choose."

Kunkel went out, much astonished that his Electoral Grace should permit the beggar to exercise his own discretion with regard to any matter.

A moment later the door opened softly, and Gabriel Nietzel entered. He remained standing humbly near the door, and leant his hand upon a chair beside him, as if he feared that he would fall if this support should fail him. The Elector looked into Gabriel's pale and sunken face, upon which the pain and agitation of these past eight days had wrought frightful ravages, and his soul was touched with sympathy.

"Gabriel Nietzel," he said, advancing toward the beggar, and there was a something of entreaty in his voice—"Gabriel Nietzel, I hope you have come to tell me that you can not persist in the frightful penance which you have imposed upon yourself, and I tell you you will be right in so doing. Our God is a God of love, and he will not refuse to pardon you, if penitent. Besides, an angel stands before his throne, and pleads for you. Rebecca saved my life, and I would recompense you for the good done me by *her*. Hear me once more. I shall not persuade you to emerge from obscurity and concealment, but I would at least procure you a comfortable means of subsistence. I will make you steward of my Boetzon estate, not far from here. In the village are a good schoolmaster and learned priest; both together could instruct the boy in scientific matters as well as farming, and if he is industrious, and becomes a worthy, honest man, we will constitute him inspector of one of our domains, and in your old age you could receive from him the bread of charity, which you will not take from me. Now say that you will accept my offer, Gabriel Nietzel."

A pause ensued. Nothing was heard but the loud ticking of the clock, and Gabriel's quick-coming breath. He had folded his hands convulsively together, his body shaking as if rocked by the fierceness of a tempestuous wind. The Elector fixed his large, beaming eyes upon him, and awaited his decision with features full of expectancy.

"Well," exclaimed Frederick William, impatiently at last, "will you accept my offer, Gabriel Nietzel?"

The beggar slowly raised his head, and his large, deep-sunken eyes met the Elector's gaze with firmness.

"Gracious sir," he said, with loud and solemn voice, "you mistake me. I am not Gabriel Nietzel, and know no such person. I am the beggar Claus, and in obedience to your highness's instructions I have brought the orphan boy whose rearing you expressed a desire to superintend."

The Elector stamped his foot impatiently, and turned away, as if in indignation—perhaps to conceal the tears which had moistened his eyes.

"Well then, let me see the boy."

"Gracious sir, you promised me to tell no one, not even him, who his parents were."

"I promised and shall keep my word. Open the door and admit the boy."

Gabriel Nietzel obeyed; he opened the door and beckoned with his hand. Immediately within the open doorway appeared the boy's pretty, slender form. His cheeks glowed with excitement and impatience, and his large black eyes were fixed boldly and inquiringly upon the strange gentleman in the gold-embroidered coat, while his crimson lips slightly trembled as if from inward emotion. But he resolutely compressed them and involuntarily shook his head, so that his long fair curls fell in a golden shower over his rosy face.

"Kunkel is right indeed," murmured the Elector; "this is a beautiful child. What is the boy's name?" he asked then, turning to Gabriel.

"He has no name, sir; he is waiting to receive a name from you."

The boy quickly raised his head and shook back the curls

from his brow. "What are you saying there, Claus?" he asked defiantly. "I *have* a name. My name is Raphael."

"His father once gave him that name out of pride and presumption," said Gabriel softly. "But he has repented of it, and, through me, begs you, sir, to change it!"

"I shall do so, Ga——" The Elector paused, warned by a pleading glance from Gabriel. "I shall do so, Claus. Has the boy been baptized yet?"

"No, sir, he has not been baptized."

"Then we will have him baptized. Has his father determined in what Church he shall be reared?"

"No, your highness. It depends entirely upon your will."

"Then he shall be received into the Reformed Church, of which I am myself a member, for I like those in whom I have an interest to be of the same faith as myself. I will therefore have the boy baptized, and then send him to a school where he shall be well instructed. Has he a preference for any profession, or has his father determined what he shall become?"

"I know myself what I want to be," cried the boy eagerly. "I want to be a soldier, a brave soldier, in splendid uniform and with saber rattling at my side, who will be dreaded and looked up to by everybody."

"Truly you are a fine little fellow!" cried the Elector, with a well-pleased smile, contemplating the boy's animated countenance and sparkling eyes. "I think it stands plainly written upon your face that you would make a valiant soldier. Tell me," he continued, turning to the beggar, "has the father expressed any wish with regard to his son's future?"

"Yes, your highness," replied Gabriel, after short reflection. "He did have such a wish, and were he yet alive he would implore your grace upon his knees to grant it."

"I promise you to fulfill it. Tell me what it is?"

"Your highness, the father of this boy would beseech you to bring up the son to walk in his mother's footsteps, and make restitution for the evil deed which his father——"

"Hark!" interposed the Elector, with frowning brow and angry voice; "it is not right for you to speak ill of the

father in presence of the son, and accuse him of sin and crime. It is written, 'Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the earth.' Instead of this, you have taught this poor child to despise and hate his father. You must do so no more. And listen, little fellow, do not believe that your father was such a bad man as Claus there says. On the contrary, your father was quite a good man, and you must reverence him in thought, for he loved you very much."

"Sir, you knew my father, then!" exclaimed the boy, running up to the Elector and laying both hands upon his arm, while he lifted his dark eyes to Frederick William's face with an expression of glowing impatience.

"Yes," replied the Elector, "I knew your father, and repeat that he was not so bad as Claus would have you believe."

"Oh, sir!" cried the boy, smiling, "I never did believe it. And the more Claus abused him the more I loved my father, and prayed to God for him."

"And you do right in this, my child," said the Elector, approvingly. "Pray for your father, and think of him as pure from sin. He was a man, and sin upon her approach found him weak, and enticed him into evil paths. But his heart was good, and therefore God pitied him, and sent him a messenger of eternal life, who made full restitution for the evil he had wrought. Let this love embalm his memory, and, if your poor father is actually dead, let us hope that he is safely housed in the mansions of eternal bliss. He has repented fully, then let us with our whole hearts forgive him as we hope ourselves to be forgiven."

"Sir, my beloved sir!" cried the beggar, weeping aloud and falling upon his knees—"I thank you for these words! They shall be my support and consolation, and, when God in his mercy releases me from life, I shall think of you while breathing my last prayer."

"Stand up, poor man," said the Elector kindly. "My child, help your father to rise from his knees."

"Help him I will!" cried the boy; "but Claus is not my father, sir. My father was no beggar, but a grand gentleman,

an artist. Claus denies this, it is true; but I am not so stupid —I know that it is true."

"And how do you know it?"

"My grandfather often told me so, when I lived with him in Venice, and I noted well his words. 'Your father is a great painter,' he would often say, 'and produces such beautiful forms upon canvas that they seem to live and breathe.' Then he would point to a lovely portrait hanging upon the wall in his chamber, and say: 'That is your mother. Only see, how pleasantly she smiles, and how good and happy she looks! This is your father's work, and is living, although the original has been long since dead and buried.'"

"Dead she is, but not buried!" groaned the beggar, clasping his hands over his face. "I can not conduct her son to her grave, for she has none. She was murdered! Murdered!"

"Hush, Claus, hush!" said the Elector imperiously. "God has taken her to himself, and also summoned to his bar *him* who probably was guilty of her death. *He* has judged and sentenced, and silence becomes man. But you have still to answer my question, Claus. You were to tell me if this boy's father would have selected any especial calling for him."

"He entertained the wish, sir, that he might become your servant, living near you, to protect you from danger and watch by you in sickness. Sir, if his father had lived he would have fallen on his knees, and with uplifted hands said: 'Do not make Rebecca's son a distinguished man; let him remain in obscurity, but give him a noble calling; let him be a soldier. When the boy becomes a youth take him into your bodyguard, and when a full-grown man, into your own regiment.'"

"It shall be as you say," exclaimed the Elector cheerfully. "But he must learn something first, for I do not intend that in the future my soldiers shall be such ignorant, rude fellows as they are now. And, that you may feel no uneasiness about the boy, Claus, I will show you directly that I have already made provision for his future."

The Elector rang, and ordered Chancellor Kunkel, who

obeyed the summons, to introduce Inspector Uhle of Joachim's vale. A few moments later there appeared in the antechamber door, the portly figure of a man about fifty years old, of grave, dignified aspect.

"Now Uhle," called out the Elector, "you shall see that I keep my word. Day before yesterday, when I was at Joachim's vale, inspecting the Prince's school of the Convent of Dambeck, and you met me with such a sad countenance, complaining of the decline of the school, and that scholars came no longer to enter themselves, I promised to procure you one boarder myself, and bade you come here at the present time. Well, here is the boarder I promised you, and he is to accompany you forthwith to Dambeck. Have you a conveyance ready, that you may set out immediately?"

"A carriage stands ready awaiting your highness's commands," replied the man, reverentially, "and my wife has a chamber already prepared for the boarder's reception. We both return you our most humble acknowledgments for your gracious assistance. War has utterly ruined our property; the Swedes and Imperialists have robbed us and left us nothing but our wretched lives."

"Yet you always had the place of inspector of the Electoral school," said the Elector soothingly.

"Yes, sir, but it brings us nothing but a shelter in the convent free of rent, some firewood, and a bit of land for raising corn and vegetables. We had planted our field, the corn was in full ear, when last year the Swedes came, pitilessly trampled down the whole, and rendered all our toil and labor vain. So we passed a wretched winter and often had but slender fare, for the school had gone down completely, and was closed the whole winter, because there were no scholars. Now there is no fixed salary attached to the discharge of my office as inspector, but my pay is entirely proportionate to the number of pupils in the school."

"Then it was indeed bad for you to have the school closed during the whole winter," said the Elector. "Be of good courage, all will be better now, and I hope that ere long, all the wounds war has inflicted upon my poor people will be healed. The Joachim valley school shall be re-established,

and all the pastors and magistrates within the confines of the Mark must exert themselves to procure studious pupils for the Prince's school. I will give them a good example, and send twelve boarders, for whose maintenance I will myself provide. Behold your first boarder, old Uhle, and you must promise me to receive him kindly and treat him as if he were your own child."

"Your highness, I promise from the bottom of my soul, and I feel that I can keep my word, for the boy seems to be a fine one, and has already won my heart. Besides, last year God took from us our only child, and so we will love the child as if he were our own. Will you go with me, little man? Will you stay with me, and be my son?"

The boy fixed his large, black eyes with a long and trying look upon the inspector's friendly, smiling face.

"Yes, I will go with you," he said after a pause, "and I will love you, too. But I can not be your son, and you are not my father, else my Uncle Claus would long since have fallen to scolding you, for he hates my father, and is always abusing him. Say, uncle, is this my father, and can I be his son?"

"No," replied Claus softly and with downcast eyes—"no, that is not your father. But you must love this gentleman as a father, and obey him as if you were his son."

"And you are to be his son and he your father," said the Elector earnestly. "Hark, Uhle! this boy is an orphan. I knew his parents, and his mother especially once did me a great service. His father also was well known to me, and I promised him to care for his only child. The boy is nameless, for he can not bear his father's name. Now I require of you, Jacob Uhle, to give your name to this child and adopt him. He must call you father, and your wife mother, and find in your house a home. Will you promise me that it shall be so, Jacob Uhle?"

"I promise you, gracious sir!" cried Uhle solemnly, drawing near to the boy and laying both hands upon his fair, curly head. "I swear to your highness to love and cherish this child as if he were my own, and promise that in my house he shall find a home. I shall from this hour give him my name and treat him as my child."

"God bless you for those words!" cried Gabriel, down whose pale cheeks the tears were streaming in torrents.

"Well then," said the Elector, gently nodding his head, "we have found a father for the orphan, a name for the nameless, and I think his mother in heaven will rejoice over it. I shall provide for the boy's maintenance, and your wife, I am sure, will attend to keeping his wearing apparel in order. You must send me your account, which shall be paid, including a stated sum for his clothing. All else that may be needful shall be communicated to you by my secretary, as also regarding the boy's baptism, which I wish to take place promptly. I myself will stand sponsor for him. You gave the boy his surname, and I will choose him his baptismal one. Let his name be Frederich William Uhle."

"Frederick William Uhle!" murmured Gabriel, looking through his tears upon the boy, who seemed to have totally forgotten him, and fixed his smiling, inquisitive looks sometimes upon the Elector, sometimes upon Jacob Uhle.

"Go now, Jacob Uhle, and see that all is in readiness for your journey," ordered the Elector. "The boy shall speedily follow you, and be your traveling companion. Go!"

He responded to Jacob Uhle's reverential bow by a friendly nod, and as soon as that person had gone out turned to Gabriel Nietzel.

"I wanted to procure you a little respite, that you might take a last farewell of the boy. I can well imagine that your heart feels such a longing, and therefore I sent Jacob Uhle on before."

"Your highness is noble and magnanimous to the last," replied Gabriel softly. "I thank you. But I have no further farewell to take, nor anything more to say to Frederick William Uhle. All is over!"

"But I, bad, old uncle, I have something more to say to you!" cried the boy, running up to Gabriel and flinging both arms around his body. "I have to say to you, that I shall always love you, and that you will never, never be anything to me but my dear, good uncle! And now, give me one more kiss for good-by."

A deadly pallor overspread Gabriel's countenance, and his

whole person shook. He convulsively pushed off the boy and freed himself from his embrace.

"Go!" he cried passionately—"go, and do not touch me! I can not bear it! Go! Have pity, sir, you see I am only a weak man, and it is too much for me. Permit me to withdraw."

"No, not you, but the boy must go," replied the Elector, ringing. "I have still a couple of words to say to you!" He directed Chamberlain Kunkel, who entered, to conduct the boy to Jacob Uhle, who was awaiting him with his carriage below. "Go, Frederick William Uhle, go and grow up to be a good and virtuous man."

The boy made no reply. His eyes were ever fixed upon his uncle's pale, quivering features, and gushing tears deprived him of the power of speech. Passively, offering no resistance, he suffered Chamberlain Kunkel to take his hand and lead him to the door. All was dark before his eyes, and he knew not himself the source or meaning of the pain which filled his little breast. It was not such pain as he used to feel when he had gone hungry and chilly through the streets of Venice, or when, holding by his Uncle Claus's hand, he had followed him wearily in his long and tiresome pilgrimages—he was not hungry, he was not thirsty, his feet were not painful, nor his head aching. But something within pained so sorely, weighed upon him so heavily, that it almost crushed him to the earth. The child let his curly head sink upon his breast, and went slowly out, not knowing that he bore with him his first grief, and that it was his heart which oppressed him so sorely.

"Gabriel Nietzel," said the Elector, as soon as the door had closed behind the boy, "one word with you now, poor, unhappy man! You have to-day offered the greatest sacrifice man can bring. You have parted with your child, and renounced him for life. You have done what is most difficult, you have conquered and renounced love. Believe me, poor man, that you have now made full atonement for your sin, and purified yourself from all guilt. The fires of penitence have cleansed your soul from all contamination of crime; they have made you a new man, let your soul rise to a new life.

Lift up your head, be strong and firm; conquer remorse as you have conquered sin. I, your Elector, to my people and servants, the representative of God upon earth, pronounce you free of all guilt—I absolve you!"

Gabriel slowly shook his head. "I will do penance to the end," he said in a low, spiritless voice. "I vowed so to do when God in his justice permitted me not to perish in the waters of the Tiber, and from the arms of death, again thrust the suicide out into the world. Only God himself can absolve me from doing penance, when he calls me to himself in eternal peace, after I shall have suffered all these tortures. He will know when I have endured enough, to be permitted once more to behold my Rebecca's face and be reunited to her."

"But what will you do?" asked the Elector. "How will you live?"

"By death, sir! My life will be a prolonged death, my existence a perpetual pang. I will eat the bread of humiliation, begging a bit of bread or a penny from the charity of men, which I shall accept, well knowing that I have not deserved it. Before your castle, sir, will I pass my life as a beggar, ever looking up at it and thinking that there you once lay in agony, suffering from poison administered by the hand of an accursed murderer; ever remembering that a blessed angel rescued you from the jaws of death, that my Rebecca saved *you;* that for *me* she went to death; and that I can not find her grave, to lie there and die."

"It is, then, your irrevocable decision to live as a beggar," said the Elector.

"My irrevocable decision, sir."

"At least tell me something I can do for you," exclaimed the Elector, almost entreatingly.

"Sir, I beg of you to order the sheriff not to drive me from your castle gate, but permit me to spend my life begging on the castle square."

Involuntarily the Elector stamped his foot upon the ground. "Well then," he said quickly, "one thing you must at least promise me! The chief cook shall send you a warm bowl of soup every day from my kitchen. You must promise me to eat it."

"Sir, I can make no such promise!" cried Gabriel, with an expression of horror. "I can not accept food and drink from one whom I have attempted to poison. Grant me the favor I asked, I have nothing further to desire."

"Well, be it so! As long as you choose you shall keep your station before the castle, on the castle square and in the pleasure garden, and no man shall dare to interfere with you. But you must daily accept the gift which I shall offer you; and if I can not come myself, take it from him who will bring it to you from me."

"I am a beggar, sir, and thankfully accept the alms it becomes a beggar to receive. But this alms must not exceed a penny, the amount commonly cast in the beggar's hat. Will your grace——"

The loud rumbling of a wheeled vehicle was heard in the castle yard, silencing Gabriel, and the groan which forced itself from his breast sounded almost like a shriek.

"It is Jacob Uhle's carriage," said the Elector softly. "The boy has gone."

"Yes, and I have lost my son for ever!" cried Gabriel with a heartrending cry of woe. "Dismiss me, sir, dismiss me, let me go."

"Well, go then, poor man!" said the Elector softly. "May God be gracious to you and speak peace to your soul!"

Gabriel Nietzel muttered a few unintelligible words and tottered toward the door.

The Elector looked after him with an expression of profound sympathy, and just as he had laid his hand upon the latch and opened it, with sudden haste he called him back: "Gabriel Nietzel!"

The beggar moved on as if it were not he who was called.

"Claus!" cried the Elector, "hear one word more!"

The beggar stood still in the open door, but did not turn round, and his body swayed to and fro.

"Claus, if you should feel some day that you have undergone penance enough—that you can forgive yourself, as God, Rebecca, and I have forgiven you—if you long for rest and a quiet spot to lay your weary head, then come to me and you shall have it!"

Only an incomprehensible murmur was his reply, and then the bowed form tottered on, and the door closed behind it.

The Elector stood immovable in his place; it seemed to him as if with the grating, creaking sound of these retreating footsteps his own past, his own youth, were passing away, and an inexpressible feeling of melancholy took possession of his whole soul. A loud noise, as of something heavy falling, aroused him from his reverie. He hastened to the door and opened it.

"What is the matter, Kunkel? What noise was that?"

"Nothing at all, most gracious sir. The beggar fainted and fell, that was all."

The Elector closed the door and returned to his own apartment. His large, flaming eyes were slowly raised to heaven, and his thoughts were uplifted to God.

"Before thee, O Lord!" he whispered, "we are all nothing but weak, sinful creatures, and all greatness sinks into nothingness! I thought myself a prince, and wanted to control. A beggar comes along and resists me with the might of his will, making me feel that I have no power over him, can control him in nothing, and benefit him in nothing! The beggar is a man like myself, and beggars are we all in thy sight, O Lord God Almighty!"

VIII.—Love's Courier Returns.

"Well, truly, you have made good speed," was the Elector's greeting to Burgsdorf, as the latter entered his cabinet. "Hardly six weeks have elapsed since you set out on your journey to Sweden, and here you are at home again."

"Yes, most gracious sir," said Burgsdorf, whose red face shone with rapture—"yes, God be praised, I am at home again. I can not express to your highness how happy I am to find myself once more in dear old Berlin. This morning as I rode into the city, and saw the women milking their cows in the streets and the hogs wallowing in the mire, I can not

paint the sensation of comfort I experienced. Ah! home is a wonderful place, and nowhere is life so pleasant as at Berlin!"

"Where the cows are milked before the doors and the hogs wallow about in the streets—those are indeed advantages, which few capitals share with Berlin, and the possession of which few envy us. In Stockholm you were doubtless deprived of these sweets, old Burgsdorf?"

"Entirely deprived of them," asseverated Burgsdorf, with a deep sigh. "It was dreadful, sir—everything so fine, so prim, so precise. The whole city was clean to a fault, and so quiet and proper in all its parts that it kept one in a constant state of anxiety. God knows I hardly dared to utter one oath all the time I was there, because I thought the men would die of fright at the sound, even though they understood not a word I said. For, would your highness believe it, men are so stupid in Sweden that they do not understand German at all."

"And you are so wise that you understand no Swedish," remarked the Elector, laughing.

"Naturally, sir, not a single word," said Burgsdorf. "I never heard such abominable gibberish in my life as those Swedes talk, and good luck it was for me that at court they spoke nothing but French."

"I can imagine, old man, what elegant French you spouted!" cried the Elector. "No doubt one word chased another, as a pack of hounds the hunted stag of conversation, and if a couple were swamped by the wayside the others rushed forward only the more courageously."

"Your highness does me injustice," said Burgsdorf seriously. "I do indeed speak very elegant French because my mother was a Frenchwoman, and I was consequently accustomed to that tongue, even while in the cradle."

"Old man, old man, methinks it has been many years since you were the inmate of a nursery."

"Sixty-two years, your highness, and my mother has been dead full twenty years. Yet I can still speak French as glibly as a dancing master and I assure you that I not only understood every word I heard, but spoke so fluently myself that

her Majesty complimented me upon the style of my conversation."

"But, Burgsdorf," said the Elector, "I had hoped that the Queen would be content to speak German with you, for she, too, has a right on the mother's side to claim that as her native tongue."

"Most gracious sir, the Queen did commence by speaking German with me, and I must say she speaks it very well. But it pleased her better to talk French with me, and she was always in a fine humor when we spoke that language."

"No doubt, it must have been right comical. But enough of this. You must now tell me all that you have seen and heard, besides all that you have done. Come, sit down in that armchair, old friend; you know you used often to sit there when you were telling my father of all your campaigns and adventures. Sit down, old friend."

And the Elector pointed to the high-backed leather armchair, while he himself took a seat upon the small divan. Conrad von Burgsdorf slowly deposited his unwieldly figure in the armchair, and assumed a thoughtful air.

"Most gracious sir," he said, "it is true I have often sat opposite your blessed father in this armchair, and told him many a merry tale, but he was always pleased to inspirit me for the task."

"What are you hinting at now, Burgsdorf?" asked the Elector, smiling.

"Gracious sir, what do they do when they want violin music? Do they not tune the fiddle and rosin the bow? It is just so with men. They, too, need to be tuned and rosined, when they would make an oration, and that in their best style."

"It seems to me you have learned at Stockholm to make a most apt use of metaphors," said the Elector, taking up a bell and ringing.

"Two bottles of Rhenish wine," was his order to the chamberlain, who obeyed his called. "Quick!"

"Your highness overwhelms me with kindness," cried Burgsdorf, with joyful countenance. "I have not seen a bottle of Rhenish wine for six weeks, much less tasted any. Those Polar bears in Sweden heat their cold blood with strong

Spanish wine when they want to thaw. For my part, I can not bear their Xeres and Madeira; they make me as melancholy as a screech owl."

"Then drown your melancholy in German Rhenish wine," said the Elector, as just at this moment the chamberlain entered and placed upon the small table near the divan two bottles of wine, with large green goblets. "Pour out for yourself, lord chamberlain, and drink."

"Without your highness condescending to pledge me by drinking first?"

"Well, pour out the fourth of a glass for me, but fill your own goblet to the brim. I congratulate you upon your happy return home."

He let his glass touch that of the lord high chamberlain and drank a few drops, while Burgsdorf drained the contents of his large goblet at a draught.

"Is the violin tuned now?" asked the Elector, smiling. "Has the bow been sufficiently plied with rosin?"

"Yes, your highness," replied Burgsdorf, drawing a deep breath. "The concert can begin, but it must be allowed me, during little pauses, to tune the violin again, for it is very easily put out of tune."

"Do so, but mind that the pauses be not too many. And now let the concert open. Tell me, how did the Queen receive you? What said she to her mother's letter, and to *you*, the living epistle?"

"Most gracious sir, Queen Christina carelessly threw her mother's letter on the table without reading it, in order to devote herself to me, the living epistle, as your grace says."

"And she knew how to read you? She penetrated your designs?"

"Your highness, she only read what I chose to let her read, and saw as much of my designs as I meant that she should. The Queen is an uncommonly wise and sharp-witted woman, but I am no dolt, either, so we two resembled a couple of flies hovering about a hot loaf, each dreading to be burned, yet grudging it to the other. When she asked me, 'What of Lord High Chancellor Burgsdorf? Is he still the Elector's confidant?' I replied, 'Your Majesty, von Burgsdorf is an old

soldier, whose only pleasure is in fighting and drinking; such an elegant, scholarly gentleman as my Elector, chooses very different confidants from that old fighter.' When I ventured to ask, 'Has your Majesty read your most noble mother's letter? Will your royal grace not concede a little to your mother's wishes, and fix your heavenly eyes upon Germany, where a handsome young prince has turned his thoughts with ardent love toward the fairest, most distinguished princess in all Europe, namely, your Majesty?' The young Queen replied with a charming smile: 'I know not of what prince you speak. There are many princes in Germany, and doubtless all would find it right pleasant to wed me, since I have a kingdom for a dowry. Of what prince do you speak, then?' 'Your Majesty,' answered I, 'I speak of the handsomest, youngest, most amiable prince in Germany—of——' 'Of young Archduke Leopold of Austria, his father's heir apparent?' interrupted she. 'Well, that certainly would be an acceptable match for a queen, for when the archduke becomes Emperor he will at least be the most distinguished prince in Europe.' 'Madam,' replied I gravely, and I believe with becoming dignity, 'I am not speaking of the Archduke Leopold of Austria, and I esteem it very questionable if he will ever become Emperor of Germany. I speak of the young Elector Frederick William of Brandenburg, your cousin, and not only the favorite of your mother but of all the ladies.' 'Oh, of *him*,' replied her young Majesty snappishly. 'You are right, he does indeed seem the favorite of the ladies, and doubtless many Ariadne-like tears will be shed upon the occasion of his approaching marriage. They say he is engaged to Mademoiselle d'Orleans, and that it was Cardinal Mazarin who brought about the match.' 'Your Majesty,' cried I, 'that is a mistake. The Elector is not engaged to Mademoiselle d'Orleans.' 'Well then, it is the little Princess of Orange,' said her Majesty, proudly throwing back her head. 'The States and the Prince of Orange will no doubt be very eager to accept the Elector's urgent suit.' 'Your Majesty,' protested I, 'indeed the Elector has never wooed the Princess of Orange, and it has never entered his mind to marry that young lady.' 'Well then, it is the Archduchess of Austria or a princess of Poland.'

cried the Queen, with a laugh which seemed much more the result of pique than of merriment. 'The Elector seems to be so much courted, and so many marriageable princesses are offered to him, that he will be puzzled to make a choice.' 'Your Majesty!' cried I, with commendable ardor, 'the Elector finds no difficulty whatever in the matter. He will only follow the dictates of his heart, and his heart has long since made its choice. His heart is fixed with longing upon the young, lovely, fascinating Queen of the North, the inspiring Muse, the heavenly goddess, who has descended from Olympus to bless mankind.' Your highness must understand," explained Burgsdorf, "that this is the style in which Queen Christina's court speak of and to her. There is a perpetual scattering of incense and sounding of praises, and the Queen is so used to it that it seems quite natural to her to be called a goddess or fairy. She instantly understood whom I meant when I spoke of the Muse and goddess. 'Sir!' cried she, and your grace should have seen how her eyes flashed and how proud she looked—'sir, I am not of the number of princesses who may be chosen; it is for me to choose the man whom I shall honor with my hand! But I must acknowledge that I have as yet no desire whatever to marry, and when I do, it must be first strictly stipulated that my husband shall not pretend to be my lord, and arrogate to himself authority over me; but be subject to *me*, and always recognize me as the Sovereign Queen of Sweden, who submits to no guidance, but that of her own head!'"

"Ah! she said that, did she?" asked the Elector, smiling.

"Your highness, those are her own words," affirmed Burgsdorf, reaching out for the bottle and filling his glass. "I beg permission to apply a little more rosin."

"Those are my little cousin's views, then?" said the Elector. "She will only accept a husband who will at once become her slave, and receive all honors and dignities through her."

"Yes, your highness," replied Burgsdorf, "only a husband who will obey orders. Her Majesty afterward expressed herself yet more fully and decidedly upon the subject, and, moreover, in the presence and with the approbation of Chan-

cellor Oxenstiern, who is a very proud and cunning man, and so intends to guard by clauses all the freedoms, privileges, and honors of the Queen, that her husband will be a mere cipher, not being allowed to meddle in affairs of state or even occupy a prominent position. The very first condition of this union is to be that her husband shall not at all share her rank, or occupy a place on the throne beside her. The Queen's husband only retains the rank and title he possessed before his marriage; on all state occasions his station is at the side of the throne, on which the Queen sits alone; he always yields her Majesty the precedence, and walks immediately behind her. He has neither seat nor voice in the council of state, and expressly promises never to interfere in Government affairs. The honors and dignities granted him by the Queen he is to consider not as his right, but as mere acts of grace. All these conditions the Queen's husband must solemnly pledge himself to fulfill."

"And what think you, old friend?" asked the Elector, with a sly smile. "Is the young Queen worth so much, as to justify a man in bowing to the earth before her and becoming a simple possession of hers? Is the Queen beautiful, amiable, and sweet-tempered? Has she a kind heart? Does she possess the qualities needful for a husband's happiness? Is she gentle, patient, intelligent, and unselfish?"

Burgsdorf cast down his eyes thoughtfully, and his countenance was expressive of confusion and embarrassment. "Is your highness asking me in sober earnest, and do you desire me to give an honest, candid answer?"

"An honest and candid answer, Burgsdorf! For what reason did I send you to Stockholm but that you might see and hear, faithfully reporting to me the result of your observations? Have no concealments with *me*, lord high chamberlain, but tell me all you know without reserve; for I know you. I know that behind your broad, good-natured face lies hidden a crafty mind, and that you are a wolf who knows how to assume sheep's clothing. Speak then, Burgsdorf, honestly and openly!"

"Yes, your highness, I will. So help me God, I shall give you my honest, true sentiments."

"If, for example, you were a prince like myself, would you like to have the Queen of Sweden for a wife?"

"Heaven forfend!" cried Burgsdorf, with an expression of genuine horror. "That is to say," he continued, softening down, "it would be a very different case for me. Were I called Elector of Brandenburg ten times over, I should be nothing but the rough, ignorant old fellow I am at present, and such a man the Queen would not suit. But with yourself, gracious sir, all is so different! You are learned, polished, handsome, and young—you are in all respects the Queen's equal."

"Queen Christina, then, is very learned and cultivated?"

"Fearfully learned and excessively cultivated," sighed Burgsdorf, casting up to heaven his little watery blue eyes. "I never could have believed that a woman could be so learned and wise, and find so much pleasure in sheep's-leather men and books."

"What do you mean by sheep's-leather men, old Burgsdorf?"

"I understand by that learned gentlemen, who look and act as if they were living in leather-bound folios. I assure your grace these *savants* are like walking encyclopædias: if they talk it is always as if they were reading aloud, and their intrusive wisdom has the same effect upon a man as a great bluebottle fly buzzing around his head and bewildering his senses. But the Queen is charmed with all this, and the more sublimated the nonsense they talk, the better pleased is she and the more radiant becomes her countenance. She entertains no one at her court but learned men, artists, and poets, and however ugly and revolting the appearance of these men, the Queen thinks them handsome, and talks for hours at a time with some old owl of a scholar, while she takes no notice of the young noblemen of her court, unless they are distinguished for some accomplishment or other."

"I am pleased to hear this of my dear cousin," exclaimed the Elector, with animation. "It proves that she possesses a noble, high-strung soul, and has nothing of the levity of her sex about her. Oh, how I envy her the happiness of being able to assemble around her a court of scholars, artists, and

poets, by their companionship refreshing and ennobling her own spirit."

"For my part," said Burgsdorf, "I could many a time see nothing either refreshing or ennobling in what was going on, and in spite of all their learning, poetry, and art, they have occasionally quite a respectable quarrel. I can tell your highness a charming anecdote in point, the circumstances of which I was eyewitness to myself."

"Tell it! tell it!" cried the Elector eagerly, himself condescending to open the second bottle and fill his high chamberlain's goblet to the brim. "What sort of an anecdote? Where did it occur?"

"At court, and in the immediate neighborhood of the Queen herself, most gracious sir. A short time ago a whole shipload of learned men arrived there, and during my first audience the Queen remarked to me that I had come to her court at a very fortunate time, for there was no court in all Europe where were assembled so many distinguished and renowned men as at hers. I was to observe everything closely, that I might give an account of what I saw to the Elector of Brandenburg. The Queen even had the kindness to introduce me to one of these learned monsters. She said to me: 'Sir, since you appear as my mother's ambassador, and have been the bearer of a letter from her grace, I will reward you by admitting you to participation in a rare piece of good fortune. Behold the greatest and most world-renowned of philosophers! The French boasts that he was born in France, and call him Descartes, but all Europe claims and is proud of him, and he has ceased to be a Frenchman, for he is a sage and is known to the whole world as Cartesius—Robertus Cartesius.'"

"Was Cartesius there?" exclaimed the Elector warmly. "Did you have the happiness of seeing Cartesius, the great philosopher and mathematician?"

"Now your highness begins in the same strain," sighed Burgsdorf. "Now you speak of the happiness which I have enjoyed. Well, I did see Cartesius, but what saw I? A little fellow, who is certainly the very ugliest man ever created, and an ape would not herself discover the deception if Cartesius should palm himself off as her son. The very children

in the street begin to cry and scream when they meet him. But Queen Christina finds him not only handsome but kissable, at least according to a little story told me by Count Oxenstiern. Cartesius was taking a walk in the palace garden, and, wholly absorbed in his mathematical problems, had seated himself under a laurel tree and fallen asleep. Now the Queen came along with her ladies, who saw the sleeping philosopher, laughed at him, and disputed whether he looked like an ape or a tiger-cat. The Queen, however, reproved them severely, softly approached, broke off two large branches of the laurel tree, and wove them into a wreath on which she fastened her own breastpin, consisting of two magnificent diamonds. This wreath she gently placed on Cartesius's bald head, then stooped down over him, kissed his lips and called out: 'Wake up, my master! Wisdom may not sleep, else folly will gain still more power upon earth. Wake up, my teacher, for your pupil is beside you and would learn of you!'" *

"Burgsdorf, that is charming!" cried the Elector; "and upon the strength of this one story I could almost fall desperately in love with this intellectual young Queen."

"God forbid!" muttered Burgsdorf, as, quite shocked, he drew back the hand which he had stretched out for his glass of wine.

"But in this charming little anecdote I see nothing of quarreling and contention," said the Elector. "I thought you were to tell of such things."

"Gracious sir, the real story is yet to come, and this was only the introduction. I was obliged to begin by telling you how many scholars and artists were to be found at the Queen's court at that time. There was also the learned Abbot Bourdelot, who had translated into French the poems of a certain Latin or Greek poet named Homer; moreover there was an Italian, a Marquis Monaldeschi, by whom the Queen is instructed in the Italian language, and who is an improvisator, as she calls it, and makes *impromptu* the finest verses. The Queen was often so carried away that she would burst into tears and offer him both her hands. Then the marquis would fall upon his knees before her, kiss the tips of her fingers, and

* Historical. See Curiosities, vol. ix.

press the hem of her garment to his lips. Thereupon he would again begin to declaim, and the scene always closed by the Queen bestowing upon him a jewel, a ring, a diamond pin, or some such present."

"Is the marquis also as ugly a man as Cartesius?" asked the Elector.

"By no means, your highness; he is quite a young and an uncommonly handsome man, and it is whispered—— But I am again turning aside from my story. One more *savant* was there, of whom the Queen made a great deal; Meibom was his name."

"Meibom!" exclaimed the Elector, starting up. "Marcus Meibom, formerly of Amsterdam, who published there so famous a treatise on the music of the ancient Greeks and Romans?"

"It may well be, your highness, for his name is Marcus, too, and the ancients are ever upon his tongue, and what is not Greek or Latin he despises and abuses roundly. Accordingly he had told Queen Christina that the musical instruments now in use were quite pitiful, and that none of the modern music heard in royal chapels was to be compared with the music of the old Greeks and Romans. The Queen was naturally very curious to become acquainted with this exquisitely delightful music of the Greeks, and she begged Marcus Meibom to have such instruments prepared under his own direction. He did so, and when they were finished, a Greek concert was to be given in the Queen's apartments. The whole court was invited, and the Queen deigned to appoint me a place quite near her, that I might have the very best opportunity of seeing and hearing. Now the concert was to begin, and the Greek musicians marched in with their curious instruments. Marcus Meibom himself preceded them. He had assumed the Greek costume, and looked ridiculous and mean enough with his bare legs blue with cold, and a piece of red stuff thrown around him as a mantle. On his head he wore a laurel wreath, and in his arms he held a queer-looking instrument that he had constructed himself. He called it a *barbiton*, and was to accompany himself on it, while he sang a song, which a certain Pindar had composed and Marcus

Meibom had set to music. I assure your grace, as the fellow came marching in with outstretched legs and head thrown back, with his *barbiton* on his arm and his eyes turned up in rapture toward heaven, I could not help smiling, and, looking around, I saw that all the courtiers seemed to be amused. But just at this moment the Queen said, 'Violà Apollon, le roi des Muses en personne,' and all faces quickly became serious again, and I used my utmost exertions to recover my gravity. And now Marcus Meibom planted himself close before the Queen. A long pause ensued, and nothing was heard but the softly whispering voice of the Marquis Monaldeschi, who was standing behind her Majesty's chair, and stooped so low down to her that his handsome head almost touched her fair and naked shoulders. He whispered a few words in her ear, and she smiled a little, but quickly grew serious again and fixed her large, blue eyes upon Marcus Meibom. He now seized the *barbiton* with both hands, held it before him with the left, and with the right attacked the strings, which growled like an old bass viol. Then followed another pause, and now Meibom began to sing. That is to say, gracious sir, he stretched open his mouth and there came forth a couple of loud, shrill notes, that sounded just as if an ass were braying after thistles. I could not help it, sir; I exploded with laughter, and my laugh proved contagious, infecting the whole court. Meibom did as if he saw nothing, and treated us to another strain of falsetto, casting, however, a withering glance upon Abbot Bourdelot, whom the Queen had beckoned to her side, and whose fine full-moon face shone with pleasure and delight. Now came another loud ass's bray from Meibom, and Abbot Bourdelot laughed aloud, the Queen heartily joining in. Then Marcus Meibom leaped up high, as if an adder had stung him, threw his *barbiton* so violently upon the ground that it was dashed to pieces, rushed upon the abbot like a wounded boar, and gave him a box on the ear—such a rousing one, sir, as I might administer to my servant."

"And the Abbot Bourdelot?" asked the Elector, much amused.

"Well, Abbot Bourdelot did the best thing that could be

done: he laughed yet louder, the Queen and the whole court laughing with him, so that Marcus Meibom become raving mad and rushed out of the hall like one possessed.*

"Truly that is a most entertaining story, and I envy you for having been present at the scene. Did the Queen do nothing afterward to soothe the antiquarian's feelings?"

"She tried, but could not succeed, for Meibom was perfectly desperate, and would not remain another day. He furiously demanded his dismissal, that he might take passage on a vessel about to set sail for Amsterdam. So the Queen was forced to dismiss him, although loth to do so, and to compensate him in some degree for his mortification, she gave him a valuable diamond ring and her own portrait encircled with diamonds."

"It seems that the Queen possesses a great many diamonds," said the Elector thoughtfully; "and she is very generous, is she not?"

"Most gracious sir, do you call that generosity? People in Sweden whisper under their breath that their young Queen is recklessly extravagant, changing all the crown property into diamonds and trinkets, to be thrown away upon strangers and foreigners."

"Do you belong to the number of foreigners who reap the benefit of this prodigality?"

"I? God forbid!" exclaimed Burgsdorf with an expression of the deepest indignation. "I am no scholar, or artist, or Italian improvisator, but merely a plain German nobleman, too clumsy to dance to the merry piping of the Queen. I got nothing, not even one little diamond."

"That is perceptible by the chagrin you manifest," slyly interposed the Elector.

"I got nothing," continued Burgsdorf, "but sarcastic speeches at my departure. Sarcastic compliments for the widowed Queen, who had committed the great offense of dropping the title of Majesty in addressing her daughter, besides using such affectionate and tender language as is customary among common people, but not seemly when used by a mother,

* Historical scenes. See Samuel Buchholtz, History of the Electorate of Brandenburg, vol. vi, p. 53.

who is the subject of her daughter, a reigning Queen. These were her Majesty's own words. 'And as regards the Elector and his wishes,' said the Queen, 'let him prove his love by deeds, if he would convince me of it. If he submits himself wholly to my will, then I shall see whether I will accept his offer and choose him for my husband. All the unmarried princes of Europe are my suitors. Only to the most ardent lover shall I sacrifice my freedom. Let the Elector endeavor to conquer my royal heart by an urgent suit.'"

"And after conquering it become the slave of her caprices, the subject of her whims!" cried the Elector quickly. "How ran the conditions of arriving at this state of happiness? The husband of the Queen is to claim neither the title nor rank of King; he is not to sit beside her on her throne, but stand humbly aside; always yield his wife precedence, and walk behind her; have neither seat nor voice in the council of state, and pledge himself never by word or deed to meddle in Government affairs."

"Yes, that is the purport of the bond which you are to sign; and if you do so, gracious sir, you have the hope of becoming the Queen's husband. This is the result of my Swedish journey, gracious sir! Affix your signature, and the Elector of Brandenburg has the honor of being a queen's husband!"

"The Elector of Brandenburg declines the honor," exclaimed Frederick William proudly. "It is unworthy of him to be only the husband of a queen, and he covets not a crown that brings no power with it." *

"You will not marry the Queen of Sweden, then?" asked Burgsdorf, with brightening countenance.

"No!" exclaimed the Elector, with powerful voice—"no, I will not marry Queen Christina of Sweden! It is over with that plan forever, and I must say it was almost a thing determined before you came. Your information, however, has turned the scale, and the matter is settled for all time!"

"And I thank God for it!" cried Burgsdorf, clasping his hands rapturously together. "If I thought that my glorious young Elector were to marry that learned and haughty Queen,

* The Elector's own words. *Vide* Droysen, History of Prussian Politics.

I would be ready to cry just like any old woman. For it is obvious, your highness, it may be very pleasant to converse with so intelligent a lady, but to marry her—pshaw! chills run over me whenever I think of it! And what would become of us poor Markers, with a mistress prizing nothing but what is foreign, and perpetually surrounded by a swarm of Frenchmen and Italians? Ah, your highness, I thank you in the name of all your subjects, for not becoming the Queen of Sweden's husband. You might have been a powerful sovereign, but assuredly an unhappy man; and we all love you so much that our first desire is to see you happy. There must be some other young lady in the world whom your highness can marry, besides Queen Christina?"

"Must I be married then, *nolens volens?*" asked the Elector.

"Yes, your highness, and that as soon as possible!"

"Well then, if it is so decidedly necessary," said the Elector, smiling, "read this paper."

He took from his writing table a letter, and handed it to the lord high chamberlain.

IX.—Noth bricht Eisen, Noth lehrt Beten.*

Burgsdorf took the letter and had hardly read two lines before his broad face flushed, and a joyful smile lighted up his features.

"Is it possible?" exclaimed he with delight. "Is your grace actually contemplating an alliance with the house of Orange?"

"Yes, I am thinking of it, and the Sovereign States likewise think of forming an alliance with the house of Brandenburg. We need each other, and would conclude a league offen-

* As there is no equivalent proverb in the English, the translator judged it best to leave this adage in the original at the head of the chapter, the literal translation being, "Necessity breaks iron, necessity teaches to pray."

sive and defensive, whose token is to be the little Princess of Orange. Her father, Prince Frederick Henry, is old and infirm. Holland dreads the power and ambition of his son, and would secure herself against them. Therefore she wants peace with Spain, that she may have rest without, and check the encroachments of the young Stadtholder within. I need Holland's assistance at the congress of Münster to prevent Sweden from wresting Pomerania from me, and Holland promises me the whole weight of her influence as soon as I have pledged my good faith to her, by forming an engagement with the Princess of Orange."

"And your grace has made a most judicious choice, I believe," cried Burgsdorf joyfully. "All the world praises the Princess of Orange as a model of grace and loveliness! Oh, and how it will vex the learned Queen of Sweden to see the Princess preferred to herself!"

"She is, indeed, quite the opposite of my royal cousin Christina. I sent Ewald von Kleist on a secret mission to Holland, similar to your own at the court of Sweden. He was to see how the land lay, and he has been at home now for three days."

"Your highness then courted two princesses at once!" exclaimed Burgsdorf in amazement.

"Not exactly courted; but it is always well to have two paths to select from, that if one should be obstructed you may turn to the other. This seems to me a most important principle in life as in politics, and one that I shall act upon all my life."

"Yes, but suppose I had obtained the consent of the Queen of Sweden also. What could your highness have done with two brides?"

"I would have weighed them both in the scales of policy, and chosen her whose side preponderated; for the head alone is my matrimonial agent, the heart has nothing to do in the matter. A prince must marry from motives of prudence, not from personal considerations. I would form an alliance with Holland, because she is a useful ally. It is a fortunate coincidence for me that the Princess of Orange is very amiable, lovely, and attractive. Ewald von Kleist is never tired of

descanting upon her astonishing amiability, and assures me that all Holland is in love with the young Princess. She, too, has a suitor whose highest ambition it is to become her husband. The Prince of Wales is at present residing at The Hague, on account of the dreadfully unsettled state of affairs in England, and is desperately in love with the Princess of Orange. From this I conclude that she is charming and lovely, for the Stuarts have a keen eye for beauty of the body as of the mind. They inherit this from their ancestress Mary Stuart."

"But the Princess frowns upon the Prince of Wales. She rejects the Stuart in favor of the young Elector of Brandenburg, who can cope with all the Stuarts in the world."

"She does neither the one thing nor the other, for she knows nothing of my suit. I merely sent Ewald von Kleist to pioneer my way, and find out the dispositions of the Prince of Orange, with the express stipulation that these preliminaries should for the present be concealed from the Princess. Now, as the Stadtholder has granted me his consent, and I have acquitted myself of my princely obligations, I should like for once to indulge myself by acting as a young man and engage in a romantic little adventure. I should like to find out whether the Princess of Orange would accept my hand merely in obedience to the behest of her father, Prince Henry, and whether, if she had her choice, she would prefer the Prince of Wales."

"And if such were the case, which I *never*, *never* can believe, would your highness give way to the Prince of Wales?"

The Elector made no immediate reply, but looked thoughtfully before him. "Burgsdorf," said he, "it is a bitter thing to be obliged to give up a first love, and I am indeed unwilling that for my sake the Princess should be called to suffer such a grief. A man must be strong enough to bend to necessity, and rank duty higher than love. He must renounce his own inclinations, conquer pain, and yet remain himself. But with a woman the case is different, and if her heart is crushed by the pressure of duty and necessity, all is lost with it, and she makes shipwreck of her whole being. I have had such an experience in my own life, and would spare my little cousin such

shipwreck, for she lives in my memory as a pretty, tender child, from whom I would be loth to draw one sigh. Therefore would I go to The Hague, to see and hear for myself; and if I am forced to admit that the Princess loves Charles Stuart, and would be unhappy if called upon to renounce him, I will use all my influence with her father to induce him to make the young couple happy by sanctioning their union!"

"And yet your highness accused yourself just now of only employing the head as a matrimonial agent, and of marrying only out of prudence!"

"But I can not require of a young girl what I require of myself," said the Elector. "Besides, to acknowledge the whole truth, I must confess that it is galling to me to become the husband of a woman who offers herself to me only as a sacrifice and follows me to the altar with secret tears. In one small corner of his heart the Prince is still the man, and although he may feel no love himself, yet he would like to inspire love, or at least not be regarded with abhorrence. Therefore I would now go to The Hague, privately and *incognito*, to see and hear for myself how matters stand, and whether Charles Stuart is a successful rival."

"I fear your highness will not be able to preserve your *incognito*," remarked Conrad von Burgsdorf, shaking his head. "Your grace can not so quietly change your scene of action. You must be somewhere, and however remote the place of your retreat, it will soon become known."

"Then I will set out on my journey publicly and with all pomp; let it be known, too, that I am going to Holland to be married, else the States would grant me no money for this journey. Alas! that I should be compelled to have recourse to the States for money! I have already written to the Stadtholder in Prussia, as well as the deliberative assembly there, that a tax should be imposed for the defrayal of expenses attending my marriage, and for the ordering of my new household."

"Your highness will not wait until this tax is granted, will you?" asked Burgsdorf, quite shocked.

"No, old man, that would involve too great a delay," replied the Elector. "The States are not very prompt in mak-

ing grants of money, quarreling, wrangling, and disputing over each head in a manner altogether shameful, and with the greatest difficulty providing the barely necessary. No, I would have long to wait, were I to defer my marriage until I received a grant of money from the States, and it might easily happen that meanwhile Sweden and France would succeed in rendering abortive a journey so exceedingly distasteful to them. Upon my urgent solicitation my mother had the goodness to lend me three thousand dollars, and this sum may serve to meet expenses, until the States have granted what I need."

"We must allow them no rest!" cried Burgsdorf passionately. "They must be perpetually reminded of their duty."

"I empower you to do this in my name," said the Elector, "for we are indeed in pressing need of this money. The three thousand dollars will hardly complete the needful preparations for our journey, for it is not our intention to appear there as a poor, beggarly Prince, but, as becomes us, in princely style, with a rich attendance of equipages and servants, and a bodyguard in new and splendid uniforms."

"And then there is your grace's wedding outfit to be thought of," said Burgsdorf thoughtfully. "For you must appear before those rich mynheers and merchants in a manner calculated to inspire them with sentiments of respect and astonishment."

"That is very true," sighed the Elector. "It would certainly be advisable to make an impression by the princely splendor of my own wardrobe; but how are such elegancies to be procured, seeing that we have no means of paying for them?"

"Most gracious sir," cried Burgsdorf joyfully, after a little thought, "if we can not pay for such magnificent wedding clothes, then let us borrow."

"Yes, but where are those who will lend to us?" asked the Elector, sighing. "Here, in our own territories, we have no silk and velvet factories, no jewelers and embroiderers in gold. We must procure everything from abroad, and there is not a tailor in Berlin capable of making up such handsome clothes, even if we were to provide him with the richest stuffs.

Such things, however, can only be obtained abroad for cash, and I have no money. All my coffers are empty."

"Gracious sir, your clothes must be made at the place where you are to be married," cried Burgsdorf merrily. "In Holland are to be found manufactories of silk and velvet, jewelers and embroiderers in gold. In Holland also are clever tailors, who understand the finest intricacies of their art. Now, all these men will be proud to credit the exalted Prince who is to wed the Princess of Orange, and thus become in some sort their fellow-country man. Gracious sir, let us hasten to Holland, there to order your bridal outfit."

"The thought is good, and we will act upon it," nodded the Elector gayly. "Yes, our wedding clothes shall be ordered in Amsterdam, and doubtless the good mynheers will credit us until the Prussian States shall condescend to gratify our wishes and send us the required sums. Ah! it is indeed unfortunate that princes can not in such matters do as they would, but are dependent upon the inclinations of their States. They presume to be my treasurers and dictate to me what I shall receive and spend. And I can do nothing but submit. I must smilingly conceal my chagrin, and, like puss, stroke where I can not scratch. Well then, stroke I shall, hoping thereby to gain my end. But meanwhile it will be a difficult task to procure the money for the needed outlays, for I am bent upon appearing in Amsterdam at the head of a glittering retinue. I know those merchants and shopkeepers! If I were to appear before them in modest, simple garb, they would not only diminish the dowry of my bride, but also impose upon me harder conditions than if I were to dazzle them by assuming all the pomp and splendor befitting my rank and station. Make your arrangements accordingly, Lord Chamberlain von Burgsdorf. We are to be escorted by a retinue of thirty coaches drawn by handsome horses, and move to the sound of martial music, and we are to be preceded by a company of guardsmen in new and tasteful uniforms. As to the present plight of my bodyguard, it is wretched in the extreme. Not one has a coat like his fellow. One wears a green jacket, another a red, the third a yellow—in short, it is insufferable. I shall have no such followers. See to it, old friend!"

"The soldiers' equipments will be the hardest things of all to procure," sighed Burgsdorf. "Coaches, horses, everything else we can get with some trouble. But uniforms for the bodyguard! Could your highness possibly spare the three thousand dollars lent you by your mother?"

"Certainly not, Burgsdorf. That is to defray our traveling expenses."

"It is a bad case then, and I know not—— Your highness," he burst forth suddenly—"your highness, I have a thought."

"Well, give it to us, lord high chamberlain."

"Your grace must pardon me for having such an audacious thought; but necessity knows no law, and sharpens the dullest wits. Gracious sir, that was a rich medallion sent you by Cardinal Mazarin. How many diamonds did it contain, and how highly did your grace value them?"

"I think there were four-and-twenty diamonds, and I valued them at at least twelve thousand ducats."

"And your grace also knew a Jew of Amsterdam with whom you had formerly transacted similar business, and who would assuredly be ready to pay that amount for the diamonds?"

"Yes, indeed, the Jew Abraham on the Strand, No. 14!"

"Most gracious sir, let me hurry forward in advance; be pleased to intrust the medallion to me, and you shall see how excellent a bargain I can drive!"

"Well, if such is your desire, take Cardinal Mazarin's medallion, and see what you can do with it. You know where I put it. The key is in the drawer, so that you have nothing to do but to open it and take the medallion."

Without speaking a word, Burgsdorf hurried across to the writing table, opened the drawer and took out the red morocco case, on which were stamped in gold the crown and armorial bearings of France.

"I have it," he cried triumphantly. "I hold your company of guardsmen in my own hands now, and they shall parade before you, gracious sir, in costly uniforms! Only permit me to set out to-morrow for Amsterdam, and pay Abraham, the Jew, a little visit."

"Why so? Can you suppose that Abraham, the Jew, is a collector of curiosities, who will pay you a high price for Cardinal Mazarin's miniature?"

"For the miniature? Pshaw! No Jew would pay me even one ducat for that. But the diamonds, your highness—the four-and-twenty exquisite diamonds which accompanied the portrait!"

And with hands trembling for eagerness Burgsdorf pressed the little clasp that closed the case, and lifted up the lid. But, upon looking into the opened case, an exclamation of horror, almost resembling a bitter oath, escaped his lips, and his eyes were raised with an expression of stupid amazement from the case to the face of the Elector, who regarded him smilingly.

"Well," asked the Elector, "what silences you all at once? Do you no longer like the medallion? Have you counted the jewels and found them in place?"

"Gracious sir!" cried Burgsdorf, drawing a breath of relief, "I see plainly that I am and ever will be a stupid old ass, and you are quicker in everything. Quicker in thought, quicker in action. The idea of *my* presuming to give *you* advice, and thinking to parade as a discovery what you have long since known!"

"Yes, the afflictions and privations of my childhood and youth early gave me wisdom in such matters. Necessity is mighty for the pulling down of the strongholds of pride! What can be more humbling at first to a high-minded man than the idea of gaining money by chafferings with a Jew? But necessity is more imperious than pride, soon teaching us to make of her a virtue. For the rest, I had no sooner laid eyes upon these jewels, than visions arose before me of the transformations which might be effected by a proper use of them. I pointed them out to you, too, but you could discover nothing in the faces of the sparkling stones."

"Because I am stupid and short-sighted, your highness. You saw at once the reflection of a whole troop of splendidly caparisoned soldiers in the brilliant stones. Will your grace only do me the favor to let me know if you saw aright, and if the diamonds have actually changed into life-guardsmen?"

"Yes, my trusty old friend, they have done so, and there is no necessity for your preceding me in order to pay Abraham, the Jew, a visit. Ewald von Kleist has long since forestalled you, and acquainted me by a private courier with the result of his visit. Tailors, shoemakers, and clothiers have done their duty, and the little company of life-guardsmen is ready. We can therefore soon set out upon our journey, and the sooner the better, for I long to have an end put to this state of suspense, and to know with whom I have to side, with Holland and England, with Sweden and France, with the Emperor of Germany or with Poland."

"Be that as it will!" cried Burgsdorf. "You will ever be true to yourself, your people, and your States, and that is the principal thing!"

"You are right, old friend; such is my purpose, and I hope by and by to become a considerable and mighty Prince, who shall not have to labor to form alliances, but whose alliance will be sought. A brilliant future can not be purchased with a breath, but we must carefully and skillfully dig deep the foundations whereon to erect the lofty edifice. Therefore we go to Holland to woo our bride. Up the Rhine to Duisburg we shall go with glittering train and noisy splendor. But there you shall go forward in advance and once more sound the Princess, and more especially her mother, who as yet knows nothing of the affair. If you bring me a favorable report, I shall proceed myself to The Hague. The rest depends upon my little cousin Louisa Henrietta. I will not have her receive from me her first lesson in the pains of disappointed love, and if she loves the Prince of Wales she shall have him. Now, old man, make haste, and discharge your office of lord high chamberlain and master of ceremonies. Prepare all things for the bridal trip, and God grant it be a happy one!"

"Yes, God grant it!" exclaimed Burgsdorf. "For my part, I am convinced of it, and deem it impossible that a prudent and pretty Princess should prefer Prince Charles Stuart to the young Elector of Brandenburg."

"Incalculable is the heart of woman," said the Elector. "In the eyes of a compassionate young girl, Prince Charles

Stuart is invested with peculiar charms, for he is unfortunate. I have just received secret tidings from England, and truly shocking they were. King Charles I, who was last year defeated by Cromwell and Fairfax in a final and decisive battle, has at last, in the extremity of his distress, fled to Newark, to the camp of the Scots. They have not, however, received him as their King, but made him prisoner and are now in treaty with General Cromwell and the English Parliament for his delivery."

"That is dreadful, that is perfectly abominable!" exclaimed Burgsdorf, with horror. "A nation take its own King prisoner, and revolt against him! And God does not send down fire and brimstone to consume it!"

"God's ways are not as man's ways. It is his will sometimes that the mighty be humbled, and the proud trodden in the dust. King Charles was very mighty and perhaps, too, very proud. Now he is a poor prisoner, and a peasant's son is a powerful general, while the King's son has taken refuge at The Hague as a fugitive and outlaw! This misfortune it is which weaves a crown of glory for his head, and renders him lovable in the eyes of the Princess of Orange."

"But, most gracious sir, it is impossible that the Princess loves him. She is, moreover, older than the Prince, for she is now twenty, while Charles Stuart is barely sixteen—a mere boy."

"He has been matured in the school of adversity, and, besides, commenced life early, for they say he has already had many experiences in Paris. Well, we shall see. Only set about your preparations for our journey in the heartiest manner possible, and let us make haste to reach The Hague."

"Most gracious sir, in eight days all shall be ready for our departure," cried Burgsdorf, "and, if agreeable to you, in from three to four weeks we can be at The Hague, and you can receive a favorable answer from the Princess herself."

"May it be so," said the Elector gravely. "Go now, old man, begin your preparations, and report to me every morning the progress you have made."

Burgsdorf pressed to his lips the Elector's proffered hand, and forsook the cabinet to enter upon his work with stormy

zeal, and set in motion tailors and shoemakers, saddlers and workmen of every craft.

The Elector remained alone in his cabinet, absorbed in deepest thought, and ever darker grew his countenance and sadder the glance of his eye.

"It is decided," he murmured softly to himself. "I must subdue my heart, I must chain it forever. The dreams of my youth are over, and its oaths have melted away like the breath of the wind."

Lightly and with bowed head he stepped across to a secret press concealed in the wooden wainscoting of the wall. His father had had this press constructed by foreign workmen, when Berlin was besieged for the first time by the Swedes, for the purpose of affording a place of concealment for his valuables and important papers. On his deathbed he had confided to his son the secret of this press. The young Elector had found in this receptacle nothing but letters and family papers, no treasures or jewels remaining. Yet he himself had one jewel concealed in this sanctum—a jewel that he often looked at, and upon which he now again fixed his sad and mournful gaze when he had opened the press. And yet this jewel was nothing but a pretty little lady's slipper, of blue satin trimmed with silver lace. But it was more to him. To him it was a memento of the sweet and bitter past, a memento of the greatest pain of his life, whose wounds yet bled and never would be healed. Again she stood before him in her radiant charms, her ravishing beauty. He saw her look upon him with beaming eyes, heard her sweet voice whispering to him vows of ardent love. And then he saw himself at her feet as he plucked this little shoe from her foot as a pledge of love, hid it upon his heart, and swore that it should ever rest there—that he would not exchange this precious jewel for all the treasures of earth, that it should be laid with him in his coffin.

"O Ludovicka, Ludovicka! what has become of these youthful vows? Whither wanders the light and fugitive foot which once wore this shoe? O Ludovicka Hollandine! why did you break your oath and trample upon love with the little foot to which this shoe belonged?"

With quivering lips and sorrowing heart he thus ques-

tioned the little blue shoe, the jewel of memory, of buried love! And the old pain revived within him, and love again stepped forth from her grave. But he *will* not! No, he *will* not let her live again! He has no right to play the love-sick swain, and to pine longingly after a woman who has betrayed and forsaken him! He is a Prince, he has a whole nation to love, and he owes it to his people to give himself a wife, the throne a successor, the princely house a family. It is indeed decided that he shall be married. All hesitation as to choice is over, and if Princess Louisa Henrietta of Orange will accept his hand, he is ready and willing to form with her an indissoluble bond.

Yet once more with trembling, timid hand he draws forth the little blue satin slipper and presses it to his lips, holding it so for a long time, and as he slowly draws it away, restoring it to its place in the press, are those diamonds or dewdrops sparkling upon it? But the Elector will conquer his heart —he will be a strong man, a valient Prince. With a quick, vigorous jerk he closes the panels of the wainscoting, and indignantly shakes his head, as if angry with himself.

"It is all over," he says aloud to himself; "the past has departed, its memories are withered. Farewell, Ludovicka Hollandine! Welcome, Louisa Henrietta! I can not give you a sound, whole heart, but I shall offer you the reverence, devotion, and love of an honest man. Marriages, they say, are made in heaven. But the marriages of princes from an exception, for they are concluded in the cabinet of policy and at the green table of diplomacy. Hail, Princess of Orange! hail, my future wife! I go to you, and in your hands lies my future! No," he continued after a long pause, and his large, blue eyes were slowly raised to heaven—"no, not in a woman's hand! In thy hand, O Lord my God, lies my future. Decide for me and for her, and give me whatever is best for me. I am going to The Hague to seek a wife for the Elector, a partner for his throne. Necessity breaks the strongest will, but necessity also teaches us to pray. And thus in my heart's hour of greatest need I pray to thee, O God: give me what is for my good. I seek a heart. Let me find it, if such is thy good pleasure."

BOOK II.

I.—The Hague.

It was morning. A fresh, beautiful, and yet warm October morning, with clear, blue sky, and that air of soothing, calm repose which rests like the eternal peace of God upon the autumn landscape. With involuntary satisfaction we feel that we may trust the promise of such a morning, and be certain that a bright, fair day will follow, to end in a gorgeous, golden sunset and crimson evening sky. No more are to be dreaded the sudden, unexpected storms of summer—those tempests which all at once obscure the brightest sky, extinguishing sunlight and veiling in blackest night the fairest day, and as suddenly darkening the smiling face of prosperity by the lowering clouds of passion. All is rest. No more glowing heat, no more crash of storm, but still all that vigor and bouyancy of life, so instinct with enjoyment, that warmth of existence so pleasurable in itself, and which as yet breathes naught of the chilling frost of winter nor the numbness incident to snow and ice.

Warmth, sunshine, and life pervaded that cheerful morning landscape. The mist, which in the morning twilight had lain like a mantle over the broad expanse of meadow flat, had scattered before the splendor of the sun, and now in white, transparent garb floated spiritlike above the plain, then mounted higher, and was lost at the horizon. The forest, which bounded the horizon beyond the broad, green, flower-besprinkled plain, was glorious in the many-tinted hues of her autumn dress, which, preparatory to approaching decay, assumed all the pomp and glow of the fullest, most succulent life. Beyond, opposite the forest, on the other side of this extensive plain, which,

flowery and green, stretched far away, and was only diversified here and there by an aspiring windmill, with its four wings, fabulous and far outspread—beyond was visible a huge and stately pile of buildings, situated near a park. This park was the great park of the Prince of Orange, and this edifice, the so-called court of the Stadtholder, in which resided the Prince of Orange with his family, and where had always resided the Stadtholder of Holland. This mansion could not properly be called a palace, for it was the result of no unity of design, no singleness of plan, but a gradually increased assemblage of individual houses, an odd conglomeration of mean and lofty buildings, of pavilions with bow windows and niches, of small, tasteless houses and high, towering pinnacles, in close proximity to which was again met a building in the modern style—a modest private dwelling. This whole jumble of architecture, which was called "The Stadtholder's Court," had grown on in the course of the century, proportionately with the increasing and ascendant power of rich, mighty Holland and her princely Stadtholder, and in these spires and niches, these towers and dwelling houses, which now formed a whole, might be read the history of the rising power and greatness of Holland and the house of Orange. These buildings formed in themselves, as it were, a little town and had been divided into two halves—the outer and the inner court, or, if you will, into the elegant suburb and the busy little city.

In the outer court, with its taller, statelier, and more modern edifices, were the private apartments of the audience hall, and chambers of State, the reception rooms, the ball-rooms, and guest chambers of the Stadtholder and his wife, the apartments of the princes and princesses. In the inner court were the halls of justice, the officers of the lesser courtiers, down to the lackeys, the grooms, and milkmaids. Beside the inner court, but removed from it a few hundred paces, were to be also found the farm buildings, the stables for horses and cows, and the barns in which was stored a stock of winter fodder. A whole world in miniature was reflected in this court of the Stadtholder. Here could be observed at once the household arrangements of a rich, mighty Prince, and the quiet everyday life of the farm and country house.

This morning perfect silence reigned throughout the outer court. Everywhere as yet the curtains hung drawn before the windows. The spacious gates were yet unopened, the lackeys in their gold-laced liveries had not yet appeared beneath the portals, and only in yon tiny cottage standing close beside the castle was to be descried the gigantic form of the porter, with a broad shoulder belt drawn diagonally across his massive frame, and a jaunty three-cornered hat crowning a head well graced by short and waving curls. But his countenance was impassive and void of all expression, and the great golden staff which he always bore in his hand by day still stood idle in a corner of the lodge; as yet there was nothing to regulate or present, for at this hour no high-born visitor drew near the grand pavilion in which dwelt the Stadtholder. In the inner court, on the contrary, reigned the most bustling and most active life. The doors of the stables were wide open, and the maids in their pretty, ample skirts of bright-red woolen stuff, and white hoods with golden ornaments over hair hanging down in long plaited braids, moved busily to and fro in the inner compartments of the stables, then took down the low, white wooden stools, and the white buckets bound with hoops of brass, in order to begin milking the cows, the most important business of the morning.

Separate from the other stables lay a larger building, that, as might meanwhile be seen, was distined for the same use as the rest of the stables. The great double wings of the middle door were wide open, and through these the interior might be seen. On both sides of the room, before pretty and highly-polished cribs, stood six cows of the high-blooded Swiss breed. Their reddish-brown hides were so glossy and sleek that it was plain to be seen what great attention was lavished upon the proud creatures. The floor was laid out in great red flagstones, and, moreover, in the stall of each of the twelve was strewn fresh straw. The scent of hay heaped high within the mangers perfumed the place, and the cows ate of it with loud, rustling noise, while the maids sat at their sides and milked them. This noise, occasioned by the chewing of the animals ruminating, and the milk spurting into the buckets, alone interrupted for a long while the peaceful silence pre-

vailing here. All at once it was interrupted by the rustling of approaching footsteps. A slender female form, clad in the simple costume of women of the middle class in Holland, entered the stable, and went with light, rapid step through the middle room. A closely plaited blue skirt of fine woolen stuff, reaching down to the ankles, inclosed a figure at once elegant and vigorous. Below peeped out the little feet, clad in high black boots with shining buckles, and cotton stockings dazzlingly white. A bodice of black velvet with wide white mousselaine sleeves enveloped the full and noble bust. Above the white and slender throat beamed a countenance full of the sweetest, loveliest maiden charms, and a head encircled by a profusion of fair ringlets, with rosy cheeks and brown eyes of wonderful fire and brilliancy; while around the slightly pouting lips played an expression of girlish tenderness.

As she stepped forward with gently oscillating gait, the cows stopped eating, turned their heads, and looked after her, as if they wondered that she had not to-day bestowed upon them her accustomed morning greeting, and stroked their glossy hides with her soft, white hand.

But the fair young girl was not thinking of her favorite to-day, although she paused before the stall of each individual cow. She was only observing, however, the small black tablets which were stuck up over the crib in every partition, and on which were inscribed different numbers in white chalk. These numbers the young girl wrote in the blue notebook which she held in her hand, carefully comparing them with the numbers which she had yesterday entered in the same book. These numbers told her what quantity of milk each cow had given on the preceding day, and thus, by comparing the entries together, the condition and well-being of each cow could be easily ascertained.

"Trude," said the youthful maiden, with sweet sonorous voice, while she remained standing before the stall of the finest cow—"Trude, something must be the matter with the cow. Yesterday she gave less milk than usual by three quarts."

The maid did not reply immediately, but bent her head

lower over the milkpail, and in milking moved her diligent fingers yet more quickly than before.

"Did you not hear, Trude?" asked the young lady gently. "I am surprised that big Betty gave less milk yesterday than on the days before."

Still the maid did not look up from her work, but a deep flush flitted across her face. "I know not why, your grace," she said in her Dutch dialect. "I have tended and fed her, and it is certainly not my fault if Betty gives less milk."

"I hope that it is not your fault," returned the young lady softly. "But I wonder why just your cows give less milk than usual. The other cows which you have to attend gave less milk yesterday."

"Some evil eye must have been cast upon me," cried the maid, in confusion. "Witchcraft surely is at work against me, some one has bewitched my cows, and therefore they fall off in their milk."

"Maybe," said the lady. "But do you know, Trude, the safeguard against such enchantments? Prayer and a good, pious disposition. You were not at morning service last Sunday. I remarked it and felt grieved. As we commence a new week on Sunday, so we should begin it with God, and entreat him to strengthen us to think good thoughts and to overcome evil ones. Forget not, Trude, to pray to God every morning and every evening, and come to church regularly. You shall see that then no wicked magic can work its spell upon you, and that your cows will again give as much milk as ever."

She nodded to the maid and went farther, not seeing how Trude looked after her with tears in her eyes, and softly murmured to herself: "Yes, I *will* pray. I *will* be good again. O Lord! forgive my sins! I am bad, but I will be better, that I may look up at her again, for to-day I *could not*. I felt as if my heart would burst. I will tell her—will confess everything to her!"

She arose swiftly from her stool and set down her pail, in order to overtake the lady. She saw, however, that she was already just at the other end of the passage, on the point of stepping out into the yard again, and was turning aside.

"It is too late!" sighed Trude, again sinking upon her

stool—" she is already outside, and the stewardess is with her."

The stewardess, principal inspector of the cow stable and the butter establishment, was indeed with the young lady, who had just entered the yard.

" I hope your grace is satisfied," she asked, " and finds nothing amiss? That the cow stable is in order, and that our gracious Princess has found the weekly account correct? "

The Princess gave her a long, sad glance, and when the stewardess met this inspection with bold, laughing eyes, the Princess sighed.

" Stewardess," she said, " come with me into the milk-house. I must speak with you."

She turned around and entered the small house next to the stable. The stewardess followed her with a somewhat disturbed, embarrassed air, and remained standing near the door in humble silence. But the Princess crossed the little apartment, and looked through the door leading to the great milk chamber within. Then, when she saw that already a few milk-maids had come in to pour the fresh milk into the great stone pans, she drew the door to, herself, and gently slipped the bolt. She crossed directly to where the stewardess stood, and again fixed her large brown eyes upon her with a long, sad glance.

" Stewardess," she said, " it pains me to be obliged to tell you that I this day dismiss you from my service, and that you must go away from here."

" Dismiss me? " cried the stewardess. " What have I done to excite your grace to anger? "

" I am not angry, I am sorry," said the Princess softly. " Sorry, because it grieves me to be hard upon your two little children, who will now be shelterless."

" My God! what have I done then? " wailed the stewardess, yet louder than before. " Some one has surely slandered me to your grace, and accused me unjustly."

" Stewardess, no one has accused you, and I never listen to slander, but prove and observe myself. You are a deceiver, it grieves me to have to say so, but it is the truth."

"Your grace is very hard!" shrieked the woman. "Your grace has——"

"Silence, speak not so loud!" commanded the Princess, "or will you have the maids to be witnesses of your disgrace, and all the world to know why I have dismissed you?"

"Your grace dismisses me," said the stewardess, with stifled voice. "Your grace calls me a deceiver, and yet I know not wherefore."

"You shall learn why," said the Princess, approaching the little table which stood at the window. On this lay open a great account book, with pen and inkstand close at hand.

"You have been in my service as stewardess for seven months," continued the Princess. "The first three months you conducted yourself well, and all your accounts agreed. Afterward you believed that you had inspired me with confidence, and began each week to lessen somewhat the amount of milk in your statement of receipts. The first weeks the discrepancy was slight, only amounting to a few quarts; but then, as I said nothing, believing that I did not supervise your reckonings, you grew bolder. During the last month you have, according to calculation, purloined almost a third part of the milk. If your purpose is to dispute it, then I shall immediately summon my majordomo, and he must revise the accounts, but then I can no longer shield you from judicial punishment."

"It is terrible, on account of such a trifle, to turn off a poor widow who has two children to support!" shrieked the stewardess. "A rich, exalted Princess can not think hard of it if her poor stewardess has kept back weekly a couple of quarts of milk for her little children. Your grace will not for such cause dismiss me from your service."

"You have not kept back a couple of quarts, but every week more than fifty quarts. However, were it still less, the justice of the matter would remain quite the same. You have cheated, you have falsified the accounts and books, and that is a crime. But a worse crime than that have you committed. You have led astray a good, innocent girl, and brought her to cheating. You thought that some day the false ac-

counts might betray you, and therefore it would be better if you could induce the maids to diminish on the tablets the amount of milk, for then it would be no longer necessary to falsify the calculations. With Trude, alas! you succeeded, and you have corrupted the poor girl. Yesterday Trude made her entry of milk too small."

"It is frightful, your grace," whimpered the stewardess.

"Yes, it is frightful," repeated the Princess; "for until now Trude was such a modest, good girl. You have led her astray, but I hope Trude may yet be saved, and if she repents of her fault, will then improve. But *you* must be gone, else you might succeed in contaminating the other maids, and inducing them to cheat."

"Your grace will not be so hard-hearted," implored the stewardess. "Your grace will have compassion upon me and my children. I, too, promise to alter and amend. Only, your grace, do not turn me away, and I will surely, surely improve."

"No, you will not improve," said the Princess, slowly shaking her head. "You are already, as I must sorrowfully acknowledge, too deeply dyed in sin, and even now there is no repentance in you, but only vexation that I have discovered your fraud. If you had been in need, if your children had been suffering from hunger, then perhaps we might have found an excuse for your dishonesty. But with me you had a sufficient competency, and ample provision for your children. You have therefore cheated from avarice and a wicked love of cheating. You have become the corrupter of my servants, and that is a crime for which no indulgence is to be found. It only remains, therefore, that this very day you leave my service and this place."

"I can not survive the disgrace," lamented the stewardess. "If your grace drives me away, I shall drown myself!"

"No, you will not, for you will fear the punishment of God," said the Princess, solemnly. "I, too, on account of your children, would not have your shame made public. You may say that you have received intelligence that your old mother in Dortrecht has fallen ill, and that you must immediately go to her. Then you can go away and look for service

elsewhere. Meanwhile your two little girls may remain here under the care of my majordomo. I myself will see that they want for nothing, and, to relieve you entirely of anxiety for the present, I will advance you wages for the next three months. Come here. Here, stewardess, is the last money you shall receive from me, and may God be merciful to you and incline your heart to what is good."

"Most gracious Princess," entreated the stewardess, "at least yermit me to kiss your hand for the last time; tell me that you forgive me."

And she threw herself upon her knees, and sought, sobbing and moaning, to seize the Princess's hand, who, however, avoided her. For the first time her countenance assumed a stern, indignant expression.

"Stand up!" she said, in a tone of command, "act not humility thus, for it is but acting. Your spirit is obdurate and hardened, for you have not even compassion upon your own children. Not one tear has moistened your eyes. Farewell, and may God have pity upon you. Not another word. Go, leave me. Tell them without that I have permitted you to go to your sick mother."

The stewardess felt, indeed, that all further entreaties would be vain, for she spoke not a word more, but, groaning and with head sunk upon her breast, she stole through the chamber to the milk room. But when once outside she was heard to give vent to shrieks and lamentations, and to tell the maids of her dying mother, and the good Princess Louisa, who had given her permission to journey forthwith to her mother, and to leave her children in charge of the majordomo until her return home. The Princess listened to the woman's loud shrieks and the sympathizing words of the maids. Then she raised her countenance to heaven and a tear glittered in her beautiful eyes. "If I have been hard, O God!" she murmured, "then in thy mercy forgive. My intention was good, for I thought that I could not do otherwise, on acount of the bad example. Lead back the sinner to the right path, and have compassion on us all!"

Without the loud screaming of the stewardess was hushed, and now nothing was to be heard but the brisk chit-chat of

the maids, who were expressing their compassion for the stewardess.

The Princess again approached the table, took up the great book, thrust it into the strong box attached to the table, and locked it. The tray, however, containing the money she kept, carrying it on her left arm, but at the same time covering it with a handkerchief, to conceal its glittering contents. Just as she drew near the outer door to go out she heard a mournful voice crying: "Where is the Princess? I must and shall speak with the Princess!"

"It is Trude," said the Princess. "I meant to have summoned her to me, but it is better to have the affair settled directly."

She crossed the chamber with hasty steps, and opened the door communicating with the milk chamber. "Trude," she called out, "come in here, I have something to say to you."

The poor girl rushed in. Her face was pale, her whole frame shook, and tears streamed down her cheeks. Close to the door she fell upon her knees, and extended her outstretched arms toward the Princess.

"Most gracious Princess," she sobbed, "I am a sinner, a great sinner. I must acknowledge it, for my heart is breaking with shame and repentance. I——"

"Silence!" interrupted the Princess. "Weep not so loud, Trude, or the maids will hear you. You need acknowledge nothing, for I know everything already. You were quite right just now. Your cows were under the influence of an evil eye. But I hope that I have broken the spell of the enchantment, and that to-day your cows will again give as much milk as ever before. Now only pray devoutly, and be good and true, and then will no evil eye have any more power over you and your cattle, and your cows will once more be the stateliest in the whole stable, and give, besides, the best and richest milk, and the entries upon your tablet note the greatest number of quarts."

"Most gracious Princess, I must own my fault, I must confess," sobbed the maid.

"Confess to God and your own conscience," said the Prin-

cess softly. "But to me you shall not confess, for I wish to know nothing, but that you are a good girl, and that you will never again allow yourself to be misled by wicked advisers into an evil course. Be good and honest, Trude, that your parents in heaven may rejoice over you. Always think of that, yet weep not and be cheerful, for your sin is pardoned."

She nodded kindly to the still kneeling girl, took up again the money tray which she had placed upon the table, and left the apartment.

With quick, hurried step she crossed the dairy farmyard and entered the little building adjoining. She hastened up the wooden steps leading into the interior, down a long passage, again over steps and through passages, until she reached the great corridor conducting to her own apartment.

Just as she was upon the point of opening the door to the antechamber, another door on the opposite side of the corridor suddenly opened, whence issued a slender young man, with laughing countenance.

"Good-morning, Cousin Louisa!" he cried. "You see how well I have kept my word! I have been favored with a glimpse of the most beautiful of princesses and the fairest of milkmaids, despite your prohibition."

The Princess only replied with a stern, angry glance, then hastily opened the door of the antechamber. When she had entered, it was to draw the bolt across the door from the inside.

"She is willful and capricious, indeed," muttered the young man. "She is offended at my having surprised her. Well, I shall make most humble apologies and besiege her until she again forgives me, and bestows upon me one of her sweet smiles. She is an angel, and I adore her, and she *must* love me, and—and she will love me, or I hope she loves me already. If Mary would but come, I might attend her in calling upon the Princess. Hark! I hear the sound of carriage wheels in the court. That is she."

II.—A Pair of Wedded Lovers.

Without delay the Princess proceeded to her own private apartment, and had carried the tray of money to her cabinet escritoire, whose middle door she opened with one of the keys on her bunch. Then she hastily drew from its inner recesses a capacious casket, and shook into it the contents of the tray.

"The last week's receipts for this month," she said thoughtfully. "I shall at once calculate the amount." She took from the casket a small portfolio, and with the pencil attached to it by a golden chain, marked down in it a few figures.

Then she allowed herself slowly to sink into a seat, and began in a half audible voice to add together the separate sums. In doing so, her lovely face had assumed a serious, thoughtful expression, and if an observer had thus seen the young Princess, account book in hand, beside the open casket heaped with money, quite absorbed in ciphering, he would have supposed that in this lovely maiden's form dwelt the spirit of a merchant and miser, whose sole aim in life was the accumulation of treasure.

"The sum total, twenty thousand florins," murmured the Princess, as she closed the book. "To that add seven thousand florins—the savings of two years' economy in the matter of toilet expenses. Altogether, therefore, I have a fund of twenty-seven thousand florins. I can go to work now. I shall now purchase a little piece of land, and found there an establishment for the education of young housekeepers. I shall have a sphere for activity, I shall have work, and for me that is the best medicine."

"Medicine! Can you need medicine?" asked a voice behind her; and as the Princess turned around startled she saw standing in the doorway at her back a youthful lady, who was regarding her with pleasant, smiling countenance.

"Mary!" said the Princess, drawing a deep breath, "oh, how you frightened me! How came you in so unexpectedly?"

"Unexpectedly? You have forgotten, then, that I announced to you yesterday my intention of paying you a morning visit? You have so far forgotten it, my fair sister-in-law,

that even the door of your antechamber was locked. Fortunately I was acquainted with the other way of access—through the chamber of your waiting woman, and across the little corridor. Through this way have I come. To be true, old Ursula, your stern doorkeeper and Cerberus, endeavored to detain me, and insisted upon announcing me. But I told her that you were expecting me, and had yourself pointed out to me this mode of entrance, and so the Cerberus had to yield and let me pass. Only think, though, fair cousin, she would by no means accord the same privilege to my brother Charles, and all entreaties, flattery, scolding, and even threats, were in vain. She maintained throughout that no man, whoever he might be, should enter her Princess's apartments by any indirect way; but that only through the principal door and great antechamber were gentlemen permitted to approach. I beg of you, Louisa, to administer a reproof to that same whimsical old person on this occasion, and to tell her that she must make some exceptions, and that the Prince of Wales is worthy of her respect and obedience."

"Respect, certainly," returned the Princess Louisa gently, "but obedience, no, dear Mary. Obedience she owes only to me and to no one else. If she had this time obeyed your brother and admitted him, I should have felt compelled to dismiss her from my service on the spot, painful as it would have been to me, for she would have done something unseemly. If I generally receive the visits of gentlemen in my own apartments, they can only find admittance through the great antechamber."

"Truly, Louisa, you are as strict as if you were the abbess of a convent," pouted the young lady. "You should at least make an exception in favor of my brother Charles."

"Wherefore, Mary?" inquired the Princess, smiling. "Why should I make an exception in behalf of the Prince of Wales?"

"In the first place, because he is your near relation, Louisa, and then——"

"Well, and then?" asked the Princess Louisa, as her young sister-in-law hesitated.

"Then, because he loves you so much," whispered the

Princess, while she threw her arm around Louisa's neck and imprinted a kiss upon her cheek.

Louisa laughed. "My dear," she said, "the Prince of Wales loves nothing but himself, and if he pays court to me, it is only because he has nothing better to do, and suffers fearfully from *ennui*."

"Oh, ungrateful one!" cried Mary; "how can you be so cruel, and—— O Louisa! how much money you have!—how rich you are!"

She sprang toward the still open casket, and with curious, questioning glance, peered within.

"Ah, these rolls of ducats," she cried, taking out a roll and balancing it on the tips of her fingers, "and these precious bits of paper inscribed with large numbers! What do they signify?"

"Those are receipts for certain sums of money which I have intrusted to the banker von Brinken," said Princess Louisa, while she slowly shut to the casket and locked the lid of the escritoire.

"How rich you are, Louisa!" sighed her young sister-in-law. "You have a regular treasury of state, while I have hardly anything, hardly anything, I tell you, although I am a King's daughter and the spouse of the hereditary Prince of Orange. I tell you, Louisa, my purse is again perfectly empty, and my poor brother is quite in despair, for his purse is in the same condition as my own. But, O Louisa! it is right hard to be a princess and yet not to have as much money as you want. Just tell me what good it does to be a princess, if you have no money?"

"It does this good, Mary, it teaches us that even princesses should learn the value of money," said Louisa, with a smile.

"You understand that," cried Mary; "you are wise and know how to economize. Oh, I remember when the Paris jeweler was here not long since, and spread out before us such wonders of art, such beautiful bracelets, and such exquisite earrings and bandeaux, that we were all perfectly enchanted—you alone remained quite cold and indifferent, hardly even bestowing a glance upon the glorious things. My

brother and I bought and bought, until to our horror we found that we had bought more than we had money to pay for, and were obliged to go in debt. But *you*, I do believe you did not buy a single ornament."

"No, I actually did not," said the Princess. "I do not like to array myself in gold and precious stones, and a flower in the hair seems to me prettier than the prettiest set of diamonds."

Princess Mary slowly shook her head. "I do not comprehend you," she said. "You do not think like a Princess. Your mother, though, is of quite a different way of thinking. *She* loves show and parade, and I can assure you that my mamma's apartments in Whitehall are not half so richly and magnificently furnished as the rooms of the Princess of Orange here in the Stadtholder's court. My mamma, too, is a Queen and a King's daughter born, while your mamma is nothing but a little Princess of Solms-Braunfeld."

"But a great Princess through her virtues, her merits, her wisdom, and her wit!" cried Princess Louisa proudly.

"To be sure she is," continued Mary warmly, "and no one respects my dear mother-in-law more than I do. But I only speak against you when I say that your mother, who is such a wise, prudent Princess, does not despise pomp, and thinks it unbecoming a Princess to be simple and unassuming. An empress could not surround herself with more splendor than your mamma. Her food is only served in golden dishes, all the appointments of her toilet table are of gold, yea, she has even had the keys to her wardrobes and tables made of pure gold.* And you are her daughter, and yet are not at all regulated by your exalted mother's example. You dress yourself as simply as if you were an unpretending burgher's daughter, and actually maintain that a flower in the hair is better than the finest diamond coiffure. Ah! if I only could have bought that splendid set of diamonds the French jeweler displayed before us! But I had no money, and when I begged mamma to buy them for me she said that in these dreadful times she had no money to spend on such things. Then I plucked up courage, and wrote a little note to my dear husband, and

* Historical. Von Orlich, History of Prussia, vol. ii, p. 64.

asked him just to buy the diamond coronet for his little wife, and brother Charles had the letter secretly conveyed to him. But William has made me no answer, and that is as much as to say that he, too, has no money, and can not gratify my wish. But I dream every night of those glorious diamonds, and, do you know, Louisa, I think if you only had the least bit of love for your little sister-in-law you would help her to get what she longs for so much."

"How can I help you?" asked Princess Louisa, perfectly amazed.

Princess Mary put one arm around Louisa's waist and tenderly laid her little head on her shoulder. "You can help me by lending me two thousand ducats," she whispered softly. "Dear Louisa, please do. Lend me two thousand ducats, that I may buy the diamond coronet, and I swear that I shall pay you back just as soon as I am in funds."

"My dear Mary," said Louisa, shaking her head, "you will never be in funds, for you are a child, and do not know how to manage money."

"Oh, when I am reigning Princess of Orange," exclaimed Mary with beaming eyes, "I shall have so much money that I can buy everything I want, and I promise you I will be more economical than your mamma, for I shall manage to do without golden keys, and instead wear beautiful diamonds."

"You are very cruel, Mary," sighed the Princess, "for when you speak of the time when you will be reigning Princess of Orange you forget that my dear, dear father will be dead."

"It was very thoughtless, Louisa, and I beg your pardon. But you have not answered me yet, Louisa. Will you gratify my wish, *chère cousine et sœur*—will you lend me two thousand ducats?"

"I can not, dear Mary, for, unfortunately, I have no money."

"How? Did my eyes deceive me?" asked Mary, in a quick, excited tone. "Are there no rolls of ducats in yonder casket, no monied bonds?"

"No, Mary, your eyes did not deceive you—all *that* is in the casket. Only the money does not belong to me."

"Not to *you*? To whom, then, does it belong?"

"It belongs to the poor, to the daughters of the commonwealth," replied Louisa. "You force me to tell you a secret which nobody knows, and to speak of things which otherwise I should have kept concealed. You have twitted me with my plain and simple dress, and mamma herself has sometimes found fault with me for being so sparing in my personal expenditures. Two years ago, when I obtained my father's gracious permission to establish a dairy at the farm, of which I was to have the control, it being also settled that the needed butter and milk for the whole household of the court should be supplied from my dairy, and paid for at current rates, my mother was at first very indignant, and nothing short of my father's gracious intercession could have procured me her consent. Since then you have all often teased and ridiculed me about my dairy, and suspected me of being avaricious, and wanting to heap up gold and treasures. But I will now confide to you my inmost thoughts, although perhaps you may not quite understand me, and only laugh at me. I felt a strong desire to do good in the world; it vexed me to be nothing but a Princess, drawing her appanage and supported by her people merely on the ground that she was her father's child. I felt a strong desire to prove my gratitude, and make myself useful to the nation that had made the house of Orange what it is, the nation that pays an appanage to me, a poor Princess. Besides, I am a daughter of this people, and share their joys and sorrows. I have seen and observed how many poor, unhappy girls there are, who are a burden upon their parents and families, who would gladly earn their own bread by the work of their hands, but are unable to do so because they have learned nothing, and can only do the rough work about a house or farm. There has been but little attention paid to founding good schools for girls, for the States have too important matters to attend to to trouble themselves about the fate of the poor daughters of the common people. But I have nothing else of importance to do, so I thought I would establish a good school, where the daughters of poor people might learn needlework, reading, writing, and arithmetic, besides rural economy, especially dairy work; that, when they go out

into the world, they can make themselves useful and earn a livelihood. I intend to found a school and public dairy which has been my plan for years. And already for years have I been collecting, saving, and working to this end. In the casket are the savings which I have laid by, and I have at last enough to effect the purchase of a piece of land in the neighborhood on which to build a house. You see now, dear sister, that I spoke the truth when I said, 'this money does not belong to me.' It belongs to the poor, to the daughters of dear Holland, and in this way I would make a slight return to her for what she has done for my family. Forgive me, then, Mary, if I can not gratify your wishes and lend you money, for you see plainly that I ought not."

"I see that you are an angel," cried Mary, with tears in her eyes. "When I see you in your simple, unadorned attire, and think why you dress so modestly, and how much money I have wasted on useless things, you seem to me to be like an angel, and I could fall down before you for very shame and contrition. Ah, Louisa, how noble are you, and what a poor, foolish child am I! But I will be different. I will learn from you, and pattern by your example. I no longer want any diamonds, and if I were to tell my brother Charles what you have done, and——"

"Mary," interposed Louisa earnestly, "I told you, that I had a secret to tell you, which nobody knew, and I demand of you to give me your hand, with a solemn promise never to reveal to anybody in the world even one word of what I have said to you. If you want me to love you, give me your hand upon it, that you will not betray my secret to anybody."

"Here is my hand then, you bad thing!" cried Mary, laying her little jeweled fingers in the outstretched right hand which Louisa extended. "If you threaten to love me no more, then I must do whatever you will, and tell nobody in the world a word of your noble secret, although my brother would idolize you if he knew it."

"My dear Mary," said Louisa, smiling, "I have no ambition to be idolized. 'Love me little, love me long,' for in my eyes that is far preferable to being the object of a temporary idolatry, however passionate."

"Ah, Louisa, but it is so delightful to be loved right passionately!"

"As, for example, my brother William loves you, you would say, eh?"

The Princess nodded. "He loves me, he loves me a great deal, and knows so well how to find expression for his love. His letters are so beautiful, so passionate and glowing, that as I read them the blood rushes to my cheeks and my heart stands still for joy and excitement, and I kiss the paper on which he wrote such heavenly words. But, O Louisa! is it not cruel in them to force William to say on paper all that he could say so much more easily and pleasantly in person. Yet I am his wedded wife, and he is my rightful lord and husband, and I can not understand by what right they prevent us from being together, never to be parted more."

"By the right of reason they restrain you, Mary, for you are both so very young, and they say no marriages over-hastily concluded are happy. Besides, it was so arranged in the marriage contract, that you should not live together as man and wife until my brother had completed his twentieth and you your sixteenth year. Your parents on both sides made that express stipulation, and you, loving children, must conform to the will of your parents."

"But things have altered so much since then," pouted Mary. "Those arrangements were entered into just because I was in England, and meant that I should not leave home and come here before my sixteenth year. But now the fierce, rebellious people of England have forced my mamma to take refuge here because *there* our lives were no longer safe. Is it not cruel and unnatural to separate my husband and myself any longer, since fate itself has united us?"

"But, Mary, you are not separated," said Louisa, consolingly. "You live quite near one another; you can see and speak to each other every day, and——"

"Fine seeing, fine speaking, fine being together," interrupted Mary. "They never permit us to be alone together, or to speak to one another save in the presence of witnesses. And as to being together, it is almost a worse separation than if we were separated by water and land. My husband lives

here at The Hague, while I live at Bosch with mamma, only separated by a half hour's ride, and yet farther parted than if an ocean rolled between us, for oceans can be crossed, but between us is interposed the will of my severe mother-in-law, and against that no force can prevail."

"Do not forget, Mary, that your mother is of the same mind as my own. And you, foolish child, be glad that you can enjoy so long the springtime of your happiness and love, and content yourself with being my brother's worshiped and idolized bride."

"Oh, William swears in all his letters that he will worship and idolize me all his life, and that it will make no difference at all, when I am his wife and with him all the time."

"I believe all men swear the same so long as they are unmarried," said Louisa, smiling; "but no one has ever heard of their keeping the vows which they bestow so lavishly upon their lady-loves."

"William will make an exception," insisted Mary, "and I know one other person who will make an exception, too, and love his wife just as ardently as he now does the mistress of his heart."

"And who, if I may ask, is this person?"

"My brother Charles, dear Louisa, and you are the mistress of his heart. You smile, and shake your head incredulously. Just tell me, Louisa, how can you be so hard-hearted?"

"I am not hard-hearted," said Louisa softly, and a light cloud of melancholy flitted across her brow. "On the contrary, I believe I am right tender-hearted."

"You are not so toward my brother Charles, at any rate," said Mary warmly. "He loves you, and instead of returning his love you do not even believe in it."

"Faith can not be forced," replied Louisa, shrugging her shoulders. "But let us speak no more of this, Mary. Why should my dear little sister-in-law trouble herself about other people's love affairs. Let us speak of yourself. You came to get me to walk with you, and of course my brother William is to be of the party."

"Of course, William and brother Charles, too, for you can not accompany us without an escort."

"For to go beside you is not admissible, is it?"

"It is bad enough," complained Mary, "that we must have companions at all. But if you and my brother Charles are talking, you can not at least overhear our conversation."

"Well, I accept your brother as my escort for the whole walk. But, in return, you must promise me something."

"What would you have of me, dear, good Louisa?" said Mary coaxingly, as she threw her arms around her sister-in-law.

"You must let us go behind, not before you, that we may see where you go and follow you."

"Do you insist upon this, Louisa?"

"I insist upon it, Mary, not voluntarily, but because I must acknowledge that this is the only condition on which mamma permits my brother William to go out walking with you and your brother Charles without other attendance, and I have given my word that this condition shall be faithfully observed."

"Well, if you have given your word," sighed Mary, "of course it must not be broken. But please, sister, let us delay no longer, and let the gentlemen come in."

"Just grant me a few minutes more, that I may change my dress. You see I am still in my dairy costume."

"And my brother tells me that he has won his wager, and seen you in your housekeeping dress," cried Mary laughing.

"True, he did surprise me; but as to winning his wager, that is doubtful, for I did not let him see me of my own free will, he only succeeded in surprising me. But now let me go and dress. I shall not keep you waiting long."

"Do so, Louisa, but—I must tell you one piece of news, a great piece of news."

"Well, what is it?"

"We are to have a visitor, a handsome, young visitor. Why, you seem perfectly cool and indifferent! Guess who it is."

"No, indeed, sister. I would rather not guess," replied

the Princess, who had already reached her dressing-room door, and laid her hand upon the handle of the latch. "What sort of a visitor is it?"

"The Elector of Brandenburg is coming, Louisa; he will be here this very day."

"Ah, I forgot," replied Louisa, with indifference. "They were talking about it yesterday at dinner. My father mentioned it to Minister von Dambohke."

"You heard that, Louisa, and still pretended not to know of what visitor I was speaking. Ah, cousin, you are sly, and know very well how to dissemble."

"I am sure I can not see in this any cause for dissimulation on my part," replied Louisa coldly.

"Why, you do not wish any one to observe how delighted you are to see your cousin again," said Mary, smiling, "but everybody knows how much interest you take in him. You never speak of him but in terms of praise, and if any one ventures to find fault with him, it is always you who undertake his defense."

"I defend him because he is not here to defend himself, and because I can not bear to hear the absent censured. You are right, too, in saying that I take great interest in him, for he is my near relation, and was always so good and kind to me when he stayed at The Hague nine years ago. I was then a little girl of ten, and no one troubled himself about such a mere child. The Electoral Prince, however, had a kind word for me, and sometimes even played in the park with me, and listened patiently to stories about my cows and little garden."

"The only question is," said Mary, a little sharply, "whether the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine was not in your neighborhood while he was listening to such rural tales."

The countenance of Princess Louisa, which had glowed with gentle radiance as she recalled these reminiscences of her childhood, was now overshadowed, and her cheeks grew pale.

"What do you know about the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine?" she asked.

"I know all about her," replied Mary with important air. "Prince William has told me all, for, you know, there

are no secrets among married people, and in our yesterday's walk, when the conversation turned upon the Elector's approaching visit, he told me the whole story. I must tell you I was very indignant at the Elector's conduct, and think he treated the Princess of the Palatinate very shamefully and cruelly. In the first place, he vowed eternal love to her and formed an engagement with her, and afterward heartlessly forsook her, although he knew that the Princess loved him passionately, and although he himself had sought first to awaken this love in her heart. Oh, it was unpardonable in him, and will be an abiding reproach to him, for his faithlessness drove the poor Princess to such despair that she fled to France, there to become a Catholic and immure herself in a nunnery. You see, I know the whole story, and this time you will not attempt to defend or excuse the Electoral Prince."

"No, I shall not attempt it," said Louisa softly, "for to defend the Elector is to accuse Princess Hollandine, and to excuse him is to inculpate her. I was a mere child at the time, and of course no one spoke on the subject to me; only accidentally have I heard this melancholy story occasionally alluded to. No one thinks of it any longer, it has been forgotten."

"The Princess will not be apt to forget it in her cloister," said Mary, with asperity; "and when she hears that the Elector is here, and for what purpose he comes, she will doubtless again shed bitter and scalding tears."

"For what purpose, then, do you think that the Elector comes?" asked Louisa.

"Ah, little coquette, as if you did not know! Well, I will tell you. The Elector comes to espouse you, to ask the hand of his cousin, the Princess Louisa Henrietta of Orange."

"My dear Mary," said Princess Louisa, with a gentle smile, "you have been totally misinformed, and I am astonished that you could believe such a tale for a single moment. Do you not know that the Elector has been courting the Queen of Sweden for two years?"

"Yes, but that match is now entirely broken off. Queen Christina has scorned to accept the little Elector, and therefore——"

"And therefore," interrupted Louisa proudly, "therefore you think the Elector will do me the honor to propose for *my* hand? Happily, however, you are mistaken. The marriage of the Elector with the Queen of Sweden is now a settled matter. The Elector, I believe, has only political views in coming here, wishing to ally himself with Holland, and he goes from here to Sweden to consummate his marriage with the Queen."

"How do you know all this, Louisa?"

"I heard my father tell Minister Dambohke so yesterday. You see, therefore, dear Mary, that you were mistaken. But now I will go and make a hasty toilet, for I know my brother William is already awaiting you with impatience."

III.—The Walk.

A quarter of an hour later Princess Louisa returned to the sitting room, where her young sister-in-law still awaited her. She had exchanged her morning costume for a dress at once rich and elegant. But she did not appear in the fashionable French robes, such as had been for some time worn by all distinguished ladies and adopted at almost all the European courts, but adhered to her national costume, only that it was made of costly materials, and a little accommodated to the prevailing mode, for the full silk skirt fell down to the feet, and instead of the Dutch boot with buckles she wore the French satin slipper with its high red heels. The Dutch cap, too, with its golden clasps had disappeared from her head, and no ornament supplied its place save the redundancy of blonde hair which encircled her brow with pretty little ringlets, fell in longer curls on both sides of her face, and was caught up behind in braids confined by a simple knot of blue ribbon.

"You look wonderfully pretty, Louisa," cried Princess Mary, coming forward to meet her. "Brother Charles will be charmed with you."

"As if I had made my toilet for him," said Louisa, shrug-

ging her shoulders. "But come, Mary, we must go. The two gentlemen, I suppose, are waiting for us in the hall below."

"Yes, and I expect they are impatient enough at our long delay."

Princess Louisa threw a mantle around her shoulders, covered her head with a black lace veil, worn at that time instead of a hat, and gave her arm to her young sister-in-law to conduct her into the hall below. Two young men in French court dresses of satin, richly embroidered with gold, advanced to meet them, saluting the Princesses with profound bows. One of them was the same young man who had so startled the Princess on her return from her inspection of the farm buildings; it was the Prince of Wales, Charles Stuart, son of King Charles I, who was at that time fighting with his people the desperate battle of monarchy against the sovereignty of the people. The other young man, a few years older, was the Prince of Orange, the Stadtholder's only son and lawful successor. His grave, handsome face was lighted up with joy as he saw his young wife advancing to meet him, radiant in youth, beauty, and love, and after his first formal salutation, he hastened up to her, seized both her hands and fervently pressed them to his lips. She looked at him, and their eyes met in a glance that needed not the interposition of words to make it understood.

"Cousin Louisa, have you not a word or a look for me?" whispered the Prince of Wales, approaching the Princess Louisa.

"Yes, I have one word for you," said she, smiling. "This is it: let us begin our walk, for the sun shines so beautifully and there is such a delicious breeze."

She turned to the young pair, who still stood hand in hand, looking at each other and speaking in soft whispers.

"Come, brother, come, sister," she said, "let us go. The sun is waiting upon us."

"No," cried Prince William, pointing to his young partner, "my sun is here beside me!"

"But she will cease to shine upon you, brother, if you do not submit to the will and direction of our mother. Be

wise, brother; we have permission to take a walk together. Let us go, then, quietly and with all due decorum."

"I may at least offer the Princess my arm, may I not?" asked Prince William, sighing.

"Yes, brother, but in sober fashion, as becomes a husband who has been married five years already."

"You do but laugh at me and my misfortune," sighed the Prince, as he offered Mary his arm and led her to the outer door.

"And you, cousin?" asked the Prince of Wales. "Will you not do me the favor to accept my arm?"

"Why so, cousin?" quietly answered she. "Let us go along side by side, freely and independently—that is best."

The Prince probably caught the secret meaning of her words, for suddenly a dark cloud overshadowed his face, and in passionate impatience he stamped upon the ground.

"Cousin," he said quickly, and with quivering lips, "you must acknowledge that I won my wager this morning?"

"Yes, cousin, you won it, although not quite fairly, I think."

"I won it, and you must pay me a forfeit. I shall esteem myself richly paid if you will give me your arm for the whole walk."

"My dear cousin," said the Princess, with friendly composure, "I accept your terms, and pay the forfeit."

So saying she took the Prince's proffered arm, and drew him forward after the young lovers, who had already left the hall and stood upon the staircase leading down into the park.

"Louisa," pleaded the Prince, pressing her arm close to his heart, "you have given me your arm for the whole walk, you recollect—for the whole walk, and you can not withdraw it for a single instant. Give me your word that you will not forget, and that you will not tell anybody, not even our brother and sister, that you only grant me this favor in consequence of a wager."

"I give you my word, cousin!"

Arm in arm the Prince of Wales and Princess Louisa followed the other two. With light, fleet step the two blooming young couples descended the stairs leading into the garden,

and followed the broad avenue until they reached the little side path leading deeper into the wooded part of the park.

Above, at her chamber window, the Princess Amelia stood cautiously looking out from behind the curtains, and with sharp eyes observed the movements of the young people.

"Ever the same infatuation, the same ardor," she said, shaking her head disapprovingly. "She will be a dangerous rival, for she will govern his heart and senses, while I shall only have his head on my side. And she is not the woman, alas! who ought to rule her husband, and Holland will not submit patiently to the experiments of a young, frivolous Princess. O God!" she exclaimed, with a bitter sigh, "it is hard that I must think of all these things, even while my husband is alive—my husband, who, as the physicians assure me, can live but a few months longer. The welfare of our house and country is at stake, however, and the afflicted wife must retreat behind the loving mother and solicitous ruler. If my son William allows himself to be ruled by this thoughtless, coquettish little Princess, he runs the risk of sharing the fate of his father-in-law, the King of England. Queen Henrietta is to blame for all her husband's misfortunes. I would not have my son experience a like fate. No, it shall not be; I will leave no stone unturned whereby he may be saved from such a disaster. The Princess can not remain here. I shall urge my husband to insist upon the terms of the marriage contract being strictly kept."

She withdrew from the window, and paced with bowed head and quick step the length of her apartment. Without was heard the sound of approaching carriage wheels. The Princess, however, gave no heed. She was wholly absorbed in thought, and her plans for the future had entirely banished the present from her mind.

"Yes," she said, pausing in the middle of the room, and proudly drawing herself up, like a queen who has just issued her last mandates to subjects cringing in the dust—"yes, it shall be so! The Princess Mary and her giddy mother must begone from here. They furnish no good example to my daughter, and my son shall not be snared in the nets of this young Circe. She must begone—that is a settled thing! This

very day my husband must make known to our Prince his discontent at seeing him thus engrossed with his future wife, to the neglect of his studies and other duties. He must insist upon his sacredly complying with the articles of the marriage contract, and not thinking of being united to the Princess Mary before she has completed her sixteenth year. William must give his solemn promise to this effect, and I shall then see myself to the removal of this whole court (so snugly ensconced here) to one of our border castles. I shall see, moreover, that they return not before the proper time. If, to my deepest regret, I lose my husband in a few months, and my son succeeds to the Stadtholdership, I will be alone at his side, and it shall be my task so to influence my son that he yield to me the sole guidance of affairs. Directed by my counsels and experience, he will never again think of playing the part of a loving shepherd to his wife. When the year is out, and the marriage may be legally consummated, then let the Princess Mary come. I shall no longer have anything to fear, and I shall remain undisputed mistress of the field."

The door was opened and the chamberlain entered. "His highness the Elector of Brandenburg!" was his announcement, and in the open doorway appeared the tall and stately form of Frederick William.

Princess Amelia rushed forward to meet him with outstretched arms. "Welcome, dear nephew!" she cried cordially. "With my whole soul I bid you welcome!"

"Thank you, aunt, for this cordial greeting," said the Elector, imprinting a warm kiss upon the Princess's lips. "It really seems to me as if I were coming home after a long absence, and I assure your grace that as I passed through each well-known spot on my way to your apartments my heart beat, as if I were the lost son returning to his father's house after years of wandering."

"So be it, dear nephew! Let us abide by your comparison, and may you find this to be a father's house. A lost son, indeed, you never were, and yet I greet you as one found again, for your absence has been of long duration."

"But I come with a heart so much the more tender and

devoted," said the Elector feelingly, "and right candidly I beseech you to receive me again into favor."

"I must needs yield to the pleading of those blue eyes," said the Princess, smilingly surveying the noble form of her youthful kinsman. "It seems to me," she continued, "that you have grown."

"When you saw me last, dearest aunt, I was but an insignificant, little Electoral Prince, and perhaps I have grown a little since as Elector; but I am yet of fearfully diminutive proportions."

"All will come with time, nephew, for you are of healthy, robust nature, and have a stout will of your own. But tell me, have you paid your respects to my husband, your dear uncle?"

"No, most gracious aunt, I was not allowed access to him, for they told me the physicians had strictly forbidden the slumber of the sick Prince to be disturbed. Therefore I have ventured to intrude upon your privacy."

"Ah, my dear nephew, your uncle is indeed very sick," sighed the Princess, "and had your visit been delayed only a few months longer I fear he would not have been here to bid you welcome."

"So they told me, and thereby hastened my movements. But tell me, aunt, can you encourage me to hope for success in the most important object of my journey? Shall I be welcome to Fräulein Louisa?"

The Princess shrugged her shoulders and sighed. "That, dear nephew, is a question which unfortunately I can not answer. My daughter is of a reserved nature, and does not willingly betray her feelings. She lives in a world of her own, and, although kind to every one, opens her heart to none. Just as you entered, my thoughts were engaged with her, for I had been looking after her as she passed down the park avenue."

"Was she alone?" asked the Elector, with animation. "Permit me to follow and speak to her!"

"Do so if you wish it, dear nephew. But you will not find her alone, but in company, and it was that very thing which occupied my thoughts. My son William with his young

Princess and the Prince of Wales went with her. For the rest, I am very glad to have an opportunity of speaking to you before you see my daughter, for I have an important communication to make to you, which I purposely reserved for a personal interview. You begged that we should say nothing of your addresses to our daughter, and this has surprised me, for it shows that a remarkable sympathy exists between you. You would not have a wife who only gives you her hand under the force of restraint, and just so, Louisa will only marry for love, and you shall now learn from me how it happened that we have indulged the Princess in this fantastical wish. The Elector of Hesse was here last year on a visit, and sued for our Louisa's hand. We gave him our consent, for she was at the age when it is customary to give princesses in marriage. But when we presented to Louisa her bridegroom elect, she was so overcome by her emotion that she fell in a fainting fit, which was followed by a burning fever. Our doctors thought that this sickness was the result of violent nervous excitement, and that it might easily prove dangerous unless they could remove from the Princess all subjects of distress. In her delirium, however, she was ever lamenting her engagement to the Elector of Hesse, and called herself a poor victim, so I took occasion, at a time when she was free from fever, to tell her that her father and I would not insist upon this marriage, but that she was free to reject the Elector if she chose. She screamed aloud with delight, seized both my hands, and amid many tears besought me to make her a solemn promise never to force her to marry. She has ever since evinced a great repugnance to matrimony, and it would be her death if I were to send her from me, and command her to become the wife of some strange prince whom she did not love. She pleaded with such touching words and in so moving a manner that it was hard to resist her, especially as the physicians had declared it so important to avoid giving her any cause of distress. I had therefore to make the best of a bad matter, and gave my princely word of honor to our daughter that we, her parents, would never force her to marry, but allow her to choose a husband for herself, or remain at home if she never felt inclined to marry. I promised Louisa this,

laying my right hand on her brow, and, like a meek, tender-hearted mother, I confess that I felt recompensed by the happy smile that lighted up my sick child's face, and that in the rosy light of dawn she looked more like an angel than a creature of mortal mold. She threw her arms around my neck, kissed me fervently, then sank back upon her pillow and fell asleep. She lay for thirty hours wrapped in unbroken slumber, and when she awoke there was no trace of fever, and the doctors said that the Princess was in a fair way to recover. And so it seemed, for in two days Louisa was perfectly well and merry as a lark. I had saved her life by my promise, but can not deny that I have often repented it since, for many eligible offers have been made her, which she has invariably declined, affirming that she has no idea of marrying, and prefers living at The Hague with her dear parents. Therefore, my dear, I can say nothing but 'Try your luck,' and if the Princess accepts your offer you will be most welcome to me as a son-in-law. But I promise to keep my word and not to breathe a word of the matter to the young lady herself. I shall leave you young people to settle your own affairs. I once committed the error of giving my daughter a foolish promise, which I can not retract, for I regard a promise as a sacred obligation. See, nephew, if you can not soften the Princess's obdurate heart. But I must forewarn you that another is making the same effort."

"The Prince of Wales! He loves her, then?"

"Yes, he loves her, and with all the impetuosity of a spoiled young man."

"And *she?* Does she love *him?* Most earnestly I beseech your grace to tell me candidly, that in case of the worst I may avoid the pain and mortification of being rejected!"

"If I had known that, dear nephew, with any certainty, I should have written to you, and begged you not to come. But I will tell you my candid opinion, and the result of my observations. It is true that Louisa is very cordial in her manners to the Prince of Wales, and more confidential with him than any other person. You might have seen that for yourself, if you had been here a few moments since. Prince William walked in front with Princess Mary, and arm in arm

followed the Prince of Wales and Princess Louisa in lively conversation."

"She loves him," murmured the Elector, "it is clear, she loves him."

"Not quite so clear, nephew mine. It rather seems to me at times as if Louisa regarded the Prince of Wales as a mere boy, and never dreamed that her kindness toward him could be attributed to any tenderer feeling than that of friendship. Only consider, he is three years younger than my daughter, and a maiden of nineteen years seems to herself sedate and mature beside a youth of sixteen. Louisa sometimes plays the part of governess to the Prince of Wales, and when we are displeased with him, and indignant at his reckless, forward behavior, she always is ready with this excuse: 'He is such a child, and so unhappy. Surely, you will be indulgent to a poor boy, who is violent and passionate, because he takes so much to heart the misfortunes of his father.' She is also of a mild and sweet disposition, and the sorrows of others find an ever-ready response in her sympathizing breast. It may, therefore, be nothing but compassion which makes her seem so kindly disposed toward the Prince of Wales."

"But if it should proceed from a different feeling, and if the Princess should return the love of the Prince of Wales, would your grace with good will consent to their union?"

"With good will, no, nephew; but you know what promise I have given my daughter. I can only tell you that I sincerely hope your suit may be crowned with success."

"You empower me, then, dearest aunt, to enter the lists with the Prince of Wales?"

"I not merely empower you, Elector, but wish it, and say with all my heart, God grant you the victory!"

She offered him her hand, which he kissed.

"Permit me to follow and speak to the Princess," he said.

"Do so, my dear. You can then see how my daughter is affected by your unexpected appearance."

"Does your grace know where the young people went?"

"No; but you may easily find out from the laborers who are at work in the park. I myself will go with you to the side path into which they turned."

The Princess took the Elector's arm and descended with him into the park. The two youthful pairs had meanwhile gone on their way. Lightly and airily, as though on wings, they fluttered through the park, ever onward, not caring whither they went, only selecting the narrowest paths and the thickest shrubbery. Occasionally, quite forgotting that a second couple followed him, Prince William paused to gaze with rapture upon Mary's blushing, smiling face, and to listen to the fond words which modestly trembled on her lips. But then his sister's gentle entreaty warned him to go on, otherwise she smilingly threatened she would take the Princess's arm herself, and finish the walk at her side. Prince William with a sigh gave heed to her gentle admonition, but a cloud of displeasure settled upon his brow.

"I can not bear it," he muttered. "This restraint is insupportable. O Mary!" he continued, with vehemence, "sometimes it seems to me as if I must burst by force the bonds with which they would unjustly fetter me."

"And I? Am I not fettered too?" whispered Mary, with tenderly coaxing glances. "Do you believe, then, that I do not feel the chains to be heavy and galling with which a cruel fate has bound me?"

"Ah, if it were fate which chained us, then I should submit without murmuring to the inevitable, and full of confidence and patience look forward to the future. But it is only the will of our parents which separates us; it is only my mother's love of dominion, who thinks that the worshiped, bewitching daughter-in-law would become a dangerous rival, that——"

"Hush, for God's sake, hush!" interposed Mary quickly; "if Louisa hears us, we are lost."

And she hastily drew her enamored young husband away.

"There they go," sighed the Prince of Wales, "a blessed and enviable pair of lovers! Oh, cousin, will you never suffer your cruel heart to be softened?"

"Cousin, my heart is not cruel, and therefore does not need to be softened."

"May I put *my* interpretation upon those words?" asked

the Prince, a flash of joy perceptible in his voice. "Do you at least mean to give me one ray of hope?"

"Hope! What do you mean, cousin?"

She looked at him so calmly with her large, truthful blue eyes, that her composure only aroused the Prince to still greater passion.

"You *will* not understand me!" he cried angrily. "You pretend not to know that I love you, ardently, passionately love you; that the height of my desire is to call you mine; that the thought of you is the only star of hope, which illumines the night of my soul; that I would die of despair if it were not for you—*you*, with that magical face, whose smile lifts me to Heaven, whose anger hurls me into the depths of woe! Louisa, I tell you—and would that I could shout it out so loud that the whole earth should tremble with the shock!—I love you! Do you hear?—I love you!"

"If you shout so once more, cousin," she replied quietly, "I shall drop your arm and join the others."

"Ah! you durst not, Louisa; to-day you can not escape me, for I have your word that you will not let go my arm during the whole walk. It is the wager I won!"

"Very true, I did give you my word to that effect," said the Princess quietly. "But, cousin, you should refrain from taking unfair advantage of me, and forcing me to hear what were better left unsaid."

"Yes, I will force you to listen! I will repeat it until its fiery glow shall melt the icy crust of your heart! I love you, Louisa, I love you! Oh, do not look at me so tranquilly and coldly, for it is this composure which drives me to despair. Have pity, cruel one! Think what a weight of grief is pressing upon me! I am a King's son, and yet have been compelled to leave the proud and mighty kingdom, to flee to a foreign land and seek an asylum at the hands of more fortunate friends. I have left my dear, unhappy father in the midst of a struggle with contending parties, who are only united in hatred of their King. My place should be at his side. Ambition and love both prompt me to battle, and if needs be die, in defense of my King and father. But the few friends

left us in England besought me on their knees to flee and rescue the future King from the fierceness of the raging multitude athirst for royal blood. My father himself urged me to effect my escape, saying that I owed it as a sacred duty to my kingdom and my family, as it was his duty to yield his crowned and anointed head to the men who threatened the monarchy. I submitted, I went. I came here with my family, desperate and full of grief. Then I saw you, Louisa, and it seemed to me as if an angel had descended from heaven to comfort me. My soul, my heart bowed down in adoration and rapture, and I felt lifted up above all the sorrows and trials of life! And this hallowed impression of the first moment has remained with me through all these weeks and months. The fugitive, banished King's son kneels at your feet, and no longer bewails the loss of country, throne, and father—the father who perhaps ere now has been butchered by his own subjects."

"You look too gloomily upon the future, cousin," said Louisa gently. "Surely the dissensions of the King and his people will be healed, and who knows how soon you will return in triumph to England, to stand once more beside your father's throne, and receive the congratulations of his subjects!"

"No, Louisa, that will not be," said Charles, in a hollow voice. "I got bad news this morning. A trusty old servant arrived with important dispatches for my mother from the King. Louisa, I will tell you what nobody here knows yet, and what I trust to heaven will long remain a secret: Louisa, a new and dreadful misfortune has overtaken us. After the last decisive battle at Naseby, my father, as you know, took refuge in the Scottish camp at Newark. He believed himself safe there, for the Scots were the only ones who had remained true to him, and fought for him against the Parliament generals Fairfax and Cromwell."

"I know, I know," said Louisa anxiously. "And they remained true, the brave Scots, did they not, cousin?"

"No, Louisa; the Scots betrayed my father, as Judas did the Saviour. The Scots sold their King to the hostile Parliament—that is to say, to Cromwell."

"Poor Charles! how I pity you!" murmured the Princess, laying her hand upon the Prince's arm.

"Yes, I am to be pitied, for this dreadful news tells me that I have lost my father, my royal inheritance, and my home! At the moment when they led my father away to the county of Northampton, where he was incarcerated in Castle Holderby, fate allowed him the opportunity of intrusting to his faithful servant Stephen a few letters and dispatches for my mother. In spite of all perils, he succeeded in making good his escape from England and arrived here in safety. Louisa, my father bids my mother and her daughters set out forthwith for France, in order to implore aid and succor for the King of England. France ought indeed to do this unsolicited for the son-in-law of her greatest King. Mary Stuart's grandson and Henry IV's daughter are reduced to beggary, and sue for the help of other sovereigns! O Louisa! Conceive the horrors of our situation, and sympathize with us in our misery!"

"Believe me, Charles," whispered Louisa, with tears in her eyes, "that no one feels more deeply with you and yours in your misfortunes than I."

"Louisa, it rests with you to transform the most wretched of mortals into the happiest. See, Louisa, my fate is in your hand. I will receive from you not merely happiness, but a home, a new fatherland. Say that you accept my love, that you return it, and I shall feel myself indemnified for all that I have lost in England. I will stay here and devote my whole life to you, in return for the blessedness which you have bestowed upon me. Say that you scorn me, and I depart with my mother. You thrust me out into the wilderness of despair, and if I perish, you may know that it is *you* who have been my ruin. Your love might have saved me, your indifference will have killed me! Speak now, Louisa, and decide my fate!"

His large, flaming eyes were fixed with consuming glances upon the face of the Princess, who, however, kept perfectly quiet and looked at him with a smile.

"My dear cousin," she said, "you take too serious a view of the matter, and erroneously attribute to me a greater influence upon your life than I possess. The misfortunes of your

house touch me deeply, for you well know my warm affection for my little sister-in-law and myself; and therefore I fervently wish that you may struggle with adversity, and restore to your father his throne and freedom. It seems to me your every thought should be concentrated upon that object, that nothing should engage you but the attainment of that end. You should banish from your heart every opposing desire, you should wish for nothing but your father's release and restoration to his kingly domains. Such were a holy aim, and no unholy or earthly desire should be allowed to divert you from it."

"You would evade me, cousin!" exclaimed the Prince, with stormy impatience. "My heavens! be merciful then! Give me at least one gleam of hope! Say with that cold, calm smile of yours: Go, cousin, fight for your throne, and free your father, and when you have succeeded in recovering your power, and are again undisputed heir to the most glorious throne in the universe, then I shall see whether I can love you or at least become your wife, for it is *something* to be a queen, especially when I know the king will be my most obedient and submissive subject. Say even thus much, and I shall thank you and say that you have left me one ray of hope."

"You are very cruel and unjust, Charles," said the Princess mournfully.

"Cruel, unjust?" repeated Charles. "My heavens! do you not see that I am in despair—that I stand before you like a wretched pauper pleading for a crumb of bread to enable me to support existence, and hope for better times? O Louisa! just look at me—see the tears in my eyes, witnesses of my grief!"

Princess Louisa turned her glance upon the Prince's pale, excited countenance with an expression of deep sympathy. Yes, he wept; unaffected tears stood in his eyes, and his lips quivered with excess of emotion.

"Poor child!" sighed Louisa. "You actually fancy that you love me, I do believe."

"You call me a child, you treat me as if I were a beardless boy, weeping for a plaything!"

"Prince Charles, you *are* a child yet, and still you talk of love—*you!* with your sixteen years!"

"And what do you know of it, if you *are* three years my senior?" cried Charles, with flashing eyes. "Know, mademoiselle; that you are much younger than I am, for you have seen nothing, felt nothing. You know neither the world, nor life, nor love. But I, mademoiselle, despite the youth with which you reproach me, am a man in feeling, for misfortune has tempered me, and years of adventure count double in the life of a man! I am older, much older, than you, mademoiselle, and when I say that I love you boundlessly, I do not say that you are my first love; your sweet face healed wounds which pitiless fate had inflicted earlier, when death snatched from me my first love. No, Louisa, you are not my first love, but you shall be my last; for I will die if you thrust me from you bereft of hope."

"You will not die, Prince, for you will find a balm for this wound as readily as for the first," said Louisa, with a gentle smile.

"You do not believe in my love, then, my despair, my devouring grief?"

"No, I do not believe in them, Prince."

The Prince uttered a cry of rage, and stood still, trembling with passionate excitement. "I will tell you why you do not believe in it," he said, with hollow voice and teeth firmly set. "You do not believe in my love because you do not understand it, because your own heart is incapable of a warm and glowing sentiment, because you are of a nature to vegetate only in dampness and mist, having no conception of heat and sunshine. Ah, mademoiselle, despite your beauty and grace, you are a poor, pitiable creature. You might be divine and you are but a thing of ice in woman's form, for you know not love."

The Princess shuddered slightly, and an expression of mingled pain and ecstacy flitted across her glowing countenance. "You are mistaken," she said; "indeed, you misunderstand me. I do know love. But what you in the folly of your passionate, childish heart call love is not true love."

"And what is true love?" asked the Prince despairingly. "Explain it to me, if you know it so well!"

"True love is never unhappy and never complains," said Louisa softly, but as she spoke her countenance gradually brightened, and at last grew radiant with the rapture of inspiration. "True love is unselfish and self-sacrificing, asking nothing but giving everything, lavishing upon her beloved all the treasures of her thought and sensibility. To serve *him*, joyfully would she go to death, and yet not die, for she bears within her the principle of endless life. She hourly denies herself, is chaste and pure, hiding in shade, and yet basking in perpetual sunshine. Nothing can shake, nothing move her; she suffers, it is true, in endeavoring to guard her own fire in solitude and concealment, yet the divine flames mount upward, seeking their native element, for God is love! True love asks for no earthly possession, yet possesses what is inalienable, herself, and in herself the purest enjoyment. Every desire of her nature is concentrated in the one wish, to know the object of her devotion blessed, and for this she lives, for this she would gladly die!"

"Louisa!" exclaimed the Prince, looking up at her with astonished, awe-struck glances, as she stood motionless, with folded hands and eyes upturned to heaven—"Louisa, how changed you are! So glorious to behold, so celestial in your beauty! O Louisa!"

She shrank like a somnambulist, suddenly awakened and recalled from her heavenly dreams and converse with the stars to earth and reality.

"Come," she said, with a shiver—"come, let us hasten on, for you see our brother and sister are already far in advance, and we shall have difficulty in overtaking them."

She hurriedly drew the Prince of Wales forward, and he followed her, absorbed in silent thought.

IV.—Friends meet again.

The Prince of Orange and his fair bride were meanwhile well aware that the two lingered behind, and consequently quickened their own pace to make the distance yet greater. Now a curve in the path entirely concealed them from their followers, and two old oaks, standing close together and of gigantic proportions, offered them a grateful shelter, where they were secure from the prying gaze of all intruders. The Prince drew his beloved behind this shelter, took her in his arms, and covered her mouth with glowing kisses.

"Mary, my dear, beloved Mary!" he whispered, "know how inexpressibly I love you, how inexpressibly wretched I am, and then say that you will hearken to my entreaties—that, like myself, you are determined no longer to submit to this unnatural restraint, no longer to suffer them to keep us apart, since we belong to each other, and have plighted our sacred troth! Speak, Mary, say that you will be mine, forever mine!"

"I will be yours, forever yours!" whispered the Princess.

He thanked her, pressing her more closely in his arms, and kissing her again and again. "And will you have courage and determination to contend against all difficulties, and to do what is needful for the execution of our project?"

"I shall have courage and determination. But tell me what we shall have to do."

He bent closer over her ear and kissed its rosy tip before he answered. "We must make our escape," he whispered—"flee before the tyranny of our parents, and force them into measures."

"Flee!" she repeated, blushing for joy and clapping her hands like a little child. "Flee! Oh, what a charming adventure that will be! But how can we succeed in evading our mother's spies, and——"

"Mary, Mary!" called the Princess Louisa's voice quite in their neighborhood. "Mary, where are you, where——Ah! there they are behind the two oaks! Come, Prince,

come quick! They would play at hide-and-go-seek with us!"

"Mary," whispered Prince William hurriedly, imprinting a last kiss upon her lips—"Mary, I will make all arrangements with your brother, and through him acquaint you with all the details of our plan. Only be on your guard, and be ready to come at any hour that I may call and——"

He saw the fluttering of his sister's blue skirt behind the oak, and, offering the Princess his arm, emerged from behind the tree.

"Here we are," he said, smiling. "We have been resting a little, and waiting for you, and I must say that you have kept us waiting a good long while."

"True, we have loitered a little," replied Louisa, "but now we will go on with renewed spirit."

"I am tired and thirsty," said Princess Mary languidly. "Let us at least find a bench where we may sit down and rest awhile."

"We are quite close to the Chinese Pavilion now," said Louisa, "and at the porter's lodge there we can procure a glass of milk for my tender little sister. Come, let us ascend this path, and in five minutes we shall be in sight of the pavilion."

Silently, thoughtfully they moved forward, until, as Princess Louisa had predicted, in a few moments they caught sight of the great Chinese Pavilion, which in the happy days of early wedlock Prince Frederick Henry had caused to be erected for the gratification of his young bride. A natural opening in the midst of the wooded park had been laid out as a Chinese garden, with miniature shrubbery, statues, pagodas, and all the odd little ornaments with which those wonderful people are accustomed to adorn their pleasure grounds. At the end of this garden, which was encircled by trees, lay the pavilion, curtained by a background of lofty yew trees. The two young couples quickened their pace, and walked briskly through the intricate paths winding toward the pavilion between flower beds edged with bits of porcelain. The porter, who had seen them coming, made haste to open the grand door of entrance, to spread Chinese carpets over the

PRINCE WILLIAM AND PRINCESS MARY AT THE TIME OF THEIR BETROTHAL.

From the painting by Anthony Van Dyck.

marble benches in front of the pavilion, and above these to stretch gigantic, umbrella-shaped awnings, which, supported on tall poles, arose like monstrous mushrooms. Our pedestrians sank upon the benches thus pleasantly shaded, and after their long walk gave themselves up with a feeling of infinite delight to the enjoyment of the scene around. The porter without delay handed them upon a silver waiter tall glasses of milk, with fruit and fresh pastry; but only Princess Mary and her husband partook of the frugal repast. The other young couple sat there mute, and not even the jests and bantering of his sister could arouse the Prince of Wales from his gloomy, thoughtful silence. Only occasionally his large, flaming eyes looked up from beneath the knit eyebrows and were fixed with glances at once questioning and wrathful upon Princess Louisa, who meanwhile heeded him not at all, but with a gentle smile allowed her friendly, clear blue eyes to revel in the beauties of the scene spread out before her. The flowers and shrubs, the butterflies sporting from flower to flower, the songs of birds, and the soft rustling of the trees as they were agitated by the breeze, filled her senses with pleasing emotions. Suddenly she started, a deep blush suffused her cheeks, and motionless, with wide-open eyes and hands convulsively grasping the edge of the black marble table before her, she gazed across the garden in the direction of the little alley through which they had just issued from the park.

She had espied the form of a young man, a young man, whom, it is true, she had not seen for a long while, but whom she nevertheless recognized with the eyes of her heart, with the pious instinct of memory. Was it indeed he, or was it only a dream? She continued to gaze beyond the garden, and her whole life, her whole soul lay in that gaze. She saw him—it was no illusion, no dream! She knew that handsome figure, displayed to such advantage in a closely-fitting suit of green velvet, with golden Brandenburgs upon the breast. She knew that noble, blooming, yet manly face, shaded though it was by a plumed hat trimmed with gold lace; well she knew who it was, who with light, elastic step and lofty bearing advanced through the Chinese garden straight to the

pavilion. Forgetting everything, only remembering that it was the friend, the playmate of her childhood whom she saw again after a long separation, Louisa sprang from her seat, and with the fleetness of a gazelle hastened to meet him.

The Prince of Wales was startled out of his gloomy reveries, the tender married pair ceased their whispers, and all three followed the rapid movements of the Princess with glances of astonishment. They now saw the young man, who with a radiant face hurried forward to meet the young lady. Now they were close together, the young man doffed his hat and bowed lowly and reverentially before the Princess. But she held out to him both her hands, and he dropped his hat, took both hands within his own, fell on one knee before the Princess, and pressed both her hands to his lips. They formed a striking group, that kneeling young man, looking up with beaming, grateful countenance, that slender maidenly form gently inclining forward and looking down upon him who knelt before her. An interesting group! More interesting than all the groups of Chinese gods and angels and genii interspersed among the flower beds! But upon the Prince of Wales it produced a very disagreeable impression, and with a face flushed with anger he turned to the Prince of Orange, who was examining the young stranger with searching glances.

"Who is this third man," he asked, "who dares to intrude here unannounced, and greets your sister with such peculiar complaisance?"

"It is—— Yes indeed, I am not mistaken, it is our cousin, the Elector of Brandenburg!" cried Prince William, with animation, and he too sprang forward to greet his relative.

The Prince of Wales likewise made a few steps forward, possibly not to salute the stranger, but to interrupt his interview with the Princess Louisa; but then he paused and slowly returned to his seat.

"No," he said proudly, "I shall not go to meet this little Elector! This petty German Prince is not equal in rank to the Prince of Wales, and therefore I shall not make advances to him and seem to yield him the precedence. I shall await him here."

"And I too, of course," whispered Princess Mary, leaning back with an air of distinguished nonchalance. "I think it very strange that my husband should desert me to meet the little Elector of Brandenburg, and, as it seems, totally forget me."

But her husband had not forgotten her, and quickly returned to her side, and behind him, engaged in friendly, engrossing conversation, came the Princess Louisa and the Elector Frederick William.

"Permit me, cousin," said the Prince of Orange cheerfully—"permit me to present to you my wife, Princess Mary of England. And here is my brother-in-law, the Prince of Wales."

After a slight obeisance both young men lifted their heads and looked at each other with glances singularly defiant in their expression.

"Why, Cousin Charles!" exclaimed Louisa cheerfully, "you do not speak a word! You are not surprised to see my dear cousin, of whom I have spoken to you so often, although his apparition was a little sudden?"

"I bid your highness heartily welcome," said the Prince of Wales, in a low tone, bowing his head.

"And I likewise bid your highness heartily welcome," responded the Elector, with his rich, full voice. "We are both guests on fair Holland's soil, and guests may welcome one another after their noble hosts have graciously received and entertained both."

"He is proud," said Charles to himself; "he would not have it seem as if I could bid him welcome here. Oh, he is proud, but I shall humble his pride!"

"Permit me also to bid your highness welcome," said Princess Mary, rising and offering the Elector her little hand. "Yes, I bid you welcome, and you must account me among the number of your hosts while you are in Holland, for I belong to them."

"True," cried the Elector, "and I esteem Holland happy, for not only does she enjoy the glorious, beautiful present, but beholds in you her bright and sunny future."

As the Elector thus spoke with a pleasant smile and a

glance full of undisguised admiration, he seized the Princess's hand, and, bowing reverentially, breathed a kiss upon the tips of her fingers.

"And now, cousin," said Prince William—"now since the ceremony of introduction is over, and we have convinced each other that we are all near relations and good friends, let us know how the world goes with you, and first of all whether we may offer you our congratulations."

"Congratulations upon what, dear cousin?"

"Why, I rather think upon your approaching nuptials."

"Yes indeed, upon your marriage," chimed in Princess Mary. "Oh, you see, Sir Elector, we are well informed as to your movements, and know that you are on your way to be married."

"I wish to heaven it may be so," replied the Elector, and his eye wandered to Louisa's face, but she was not looking at him. "Yes, your grace is right; I trust that my marriage will be the result of this trip, but unhappily I am yet ignorant of the name of my bride."

Princess Louisa quickly raised her eyes, and looked inquiringly into the smiling countenance of the Elector, whose glance turned invariably upon her.

"What do you mean, cousin, by saying that you do not know the name of your bride?" exclaimed Prince William.

"Indeed, I do not know whether the lady I am to marry is called Politica or Bellona——"

"O Sir Elector!" cried Princess Mary, "then we know better than you yourself. Your bride's name is Christina, and they say that not stern Dame Politica but the god of love has managed the affair for you."

"Who is your grace's informant?"

"Why, my sweet sister-in-law, the Princess Louisa, who stands there so demurely, and has not spoken a word since the Elector came."

"Did you say so, cousin?" asked the Elector, turning to the Princess. "Did you say that I was to marry Queen Christina of Sweden?"

"Yes, cousin," she quietly answered, with simple candor. "I repeated what I heard my father say at table yesterday

to his minister—that you would call here on your way to Sweden, where your marriage was to take place. This piece of news struck me as perfectly natural, and I was glad to hear it, for I know that you have been courting the young Queen for the last two years."

"And you were glad to hear this piece of news? Well, cousin, I am sorry to have to deny you this pleasure for I have no intention whatever of proceeding to Sweden, and there is no longer any talk of a union between Queen Christina and myself."

A flash of light for an instant brightened Louisa's face; but it was only for an instant, and nobody perceived it, nobody—except the Elector.

"Poor cousin!" said the Prince of Wales, in compassionate tone, "I pity your grace. It would have been such an advantageous match for the Elector of Brandenburg to marry a Queen of Sweden."

The Elector bit his lip, and indignation gleamed in his eye, but he speedily recovered his self-control and forced himself to smile.

"If I had esteemed it as such, your highness, I should not have declined its advantages."

"Your grace declined, then?" said the Princess Mary. "It was your grace who rejected the Queen and——"

"Mary," interposed Louisa quickly, "how can you talk so, child that you are? Why disturb ourselves about political marriages, and what is it to us whither our dear cousin goes when he leaves Holland? Let us be glad that he is here now, and I hope, Cousin Frederick, that your visit will be a long one."

"I shall stay, if *you* wish it, Cousin Louisa," said the Elector courteously.

"Ah! there the Elector says more out of gallantry than is justifiable," exclaimed the Prince of Wales passionately. "Your grace just said that you were to be married, if not to the Queen of Sweden, to some other lady. Permit me to guess the name of your ladylove!"

"No, I shall be the one to guess," exclaimed Mary eagerly. "I know the name of your ladylove."

"Most gracious lady," smiled the Elector, "I beg you then to let me hear it."

"Her name," said the Princess slowly, while her laughing eyes glanced roguishly at the faces of all present—"her name is—Princess Ludovicka Hollandine."

This name, pronounced so suddenly, so unexpectedly, produced a different impression upon each. The Prince of Wales broke out into a loud, merry laugh; Prince William started and drew nearer his wife, softly whispering a few words in her ear; Princess Louisa's cheeks became deadly pale, and, as if seized with a sudden faintness, she sank upon the marble bench. The Elector himself grew pale for a moment, and pressed his lips firmly together.

"Good heavens!" said Mary, with a show of astonishment. "I must have said something very bad to throw you all into such confusion!"

"No, your highness," replied the Elector, breathing more freely, "you said nothing bad, but something very sad, for you recalled the name of a lady once dear to my heart, and for whose sake I have suffered much. It were cowardly in me to deny the memories of my past, and I have the courage candidly to confess them. Yes, your highness, Princess Ludovicka was the mistress of my affections; yet, if I say was, I may add it is not my fault that she is no longer so, and this consciousness has served to console me during days when I suffered for and—through her."

A pause ensued. Suddenly Princess Louisa arose, and her countenance was lighted up with enthusiasm and joy. She approached the Elector and offered him her hand.

"Cousin," she said, "I thank you, for that was a good and worthy answer, and proves that you have a strong, brave heart that mocks not at past sufferings and hides not its wounds. I think, though, that wounds borne on the heart are just as honorable as those gained by warriors on the battle field. Both prove that one has fought and received his wounds bravely. But now," she continued, in lighter, more cheerful tones, "let me propose that we return home."

"Agreed!" exclaimed all, visibly glad to be freed from an embarrassing situation. Prince William offered his arm to

his young wife and threaded with her the labyrinthine paths of the Chinese garden. The Elector approached the Princess Louisa. "Be pleased to accept my arm, cousin, and——"

"I beg pardon, Sir Elector," said the sharp, cutting voice of the Prince of Wales, close to his ear—"I beg pardon." He stepped in front of the Elector, and offered the Princess his arm. "Remember our wager," he whispered softly. The Princess reluctantly laid her hand on the Prince's arm, but at the same time turned her face toward the Elector, who had stepped back, pale and in evident indignation.

"I beg you," she said softly, "to walk on my right side, that we may all three go together."

The Elector declined with a bow. "I would only disturb your graces," he said proudly. "A third is always an intruder. Permit me to follow you."

The Princess's hand trembled on the arm of the Prince of Wales, but he held her fast, and once more whispered, "Remember our wager and your pledged word."

Princess Louisa said no more, and proceeded, still holding the Prince's arm. The Elector followed in moody silence.

V.—The Challenge.

"Well, dear nephew," said the Princess Amelia the next morning, as the Elector entered her apartment, "be kind enough to acquaint me with the events of yesterday. In the first place, how did Louisa receive you?"

"With gracious affability, aunt," replied the Elector. "I derived the happiest auguries from the warmth of her first greeting, but alas! I was soon made to feel that I was laboring under a delusion."

"How so? What can have happened?"

"When they prepared to return to the palace, I offered my arm to the Princess, but, the Prince of Wales stepping up at this moment and offering his arm, she left me standing and accepted him as her escort."

"No good sign, indeed," sighed Princess Amelia. "And how was it during the walk. You at least talked a great deal to her, did you not?"

"Very little, gracious lady. The Prince of Wales occupied the field, and wholly engrossed the conversation. It must be acknowledged, too, that he has a right voluble tongue and a full flow of breath. I could not compete with him, and therefore kept silence."

"And were sullen and peevish of course! And that is what you call seeking a woman's love! Do you not see that Louisa could not act differently? You have been absent so many years, and paid your addresses to so many other ladies, that you could not expect her to greet your tardy arrival by open demonstrations of favor. You must make up your mind to submit to a little teasing, for even if she prefers you to the Prince of Wales, she would not willingly betray her feelings so prematurely."

"I could not have believed that the Princess Louisa Henrietta would play the coquette," said the Elector thoughtfully, in an undertone.

"All we women are a little coquettish, and must be so," replied the Princess, smiling. "But hark, nephew! I have some good news for you. Queen Henrietta of England was here yesterday evening, and we held a long conference with her. She has received a most melancholy message from her husband in England. The Scots have betrayed the unhappy King into the hands of Parliament, and he is now a prisoner in some isolated castle. The Queen is to proceed to France without delay, in order to solicit there subsidies of money and troops. We can not think of objecting to her departure, and it is therefore determined that day after to-morrow she with her whole family will leave The Hague on their way to France. Now, nephew, what say you to this good news?"

"I know not in what respect you esteem this good news, gracious lady. I see plainly that the Stadtholder could not detain the Queen, and that the States-General could not under present circumstances incur the risk of war with England; but from the bottom of my heart I pity the poor Queen

and her husband, for I do not believe that she will obtain the desired aid from France."

"Good heavens! dear nephew, just for once lose sight of politics, and consider this affair from a personal point of view. I tell you, the Queen *with her family* leaves The Hague for France. That is to say, the Prince of Wales accompanies his mother, and therefore day after to-morrow you will be rid of a troublesome rival."

"And your grace actually supposes that I would have greater hope of winning the Princess's favor if the Prince of Wales were no longer present? But I confess that it would be rather a humiliating thought to me to feel that I was merely preferred because my rival had been forced by fate to vacate the field. I would owe such preference only to the free, unbiassed will of the Princess; and if she laments the departure of the Prince of Wales, I must say that I sincerely lament it with her."

"I have not heard that my daughter does lament it," said Princess Amelia, shrugging her shoulders.

"She knows, then, of the Prince's projected journey?"

"Yes, for she was present yesterday evening at the family conference, and has already been into my cabinet this morning to beg me to gratify her brother's wishes and urge Queen Henrietta not to take her daughter Mary to France with her, but to leave her behind with us."

"What, did she think of taking the Princess Mary, Prince William's wife, to France?" asked the Elector, much astonished.

"She *goes* to France," rejoined the Princess in a severe tone. "Her place is at her mother's side, and not until she has completed her sixteenth year shall she return here as the wife of the Prince of Orange. So ran the marriage contract, and we are firmly determined to abide by it. You are a far-sighted politician, nephew, and if you could have observed the Princess and her young husband a little longer, you would have seen that the welfare of the Prince and our country necessitated this measure."

"I believe that I already know the state of the case," said the Elector, smiling. "Your grace with reason dreads

to see reacted the old fable of Hercules and the fair Omphale."

"I am not surprised at this evidence of your quick discernment," smiled the Princess. "But the young people, alas! consider this measure as unreasonable and tyrannical, and consequently, since yesterday evening, the younger members of our family have been totally out of tune. Therefore we had to excuse ourselves last evening, for nothing was to be seen but weeping eyes and mournful countenances. But I beg you to counsel the young people to listen to reason, and especially to try and convince my son that this short separation is for his good."

"But, most gracious aunt, he loves his young wife, and love seldom listens to reason. Meanwhile, since such are your grace's commands, I will endeavor to call the Prince's attention to some grounds for consolation, although I am convinced that these grounds will be equally unwelcome with the consoler."

The Elector took his leave of Princess Amelia and repaired to Prince William's apartments. The *valet de chambre* stood in the antechamber, and with an expression of painful regret announced that his highness was suffering dreadfully from toothache, and had given strict orders to admit no one, as he preferred to suffer in solitude. Just as he made this assertion, the sound of loud and violent talking was heard within the Prince's chamber.

"The Prince is not alone," said the Elector, smiling, "for methinks I hear talking in his room."

"Most gracious highness, it is the Prince talking to himself," said the valet with respectful earnestness. "His grace always does so when he has the toothache."

The Elector left the antechamber and descended into the park. The lovely repose and sweet tranquillity of nature here surrounding him did him good by refreshing his spirit, and he gave himself up to them with a feeling of infinite delight. Slowly he went down the broad avenue, and now turned off into the shady side path, which he traversed, absorbed in thought. All at once he paused and looked around. It seemed to him that quite close to him he heard the Princess

Louisa's soft and melodious voice. And he was not mistaken! There she came, emerging from the shrubbery arm in arm with her young sister-in-law Mary, and both so absorbed in their whispered conversation that they did not perceive the Elector, who had stepped aside, although they were coming up the very path in which he stood. This was the first time that he had been able quietly to observe the Princess, and with a painfully sweet feeling he gazed upon her noble, slender form and lovely, interesting face. He inwardly exclaimed: "There I might have found a mother for my people, a wife for my heart! Why have I come so late? Why did I wait until another came and won the love which might yet make me so happy? How sad she looks! She is naturally grieving, because Prince Charles must leave her. Why should I care whether she is sad or not?" And with defiant though melancholy air, the Elector advanced and saluted the ladies, who were now quite near him. A beautiful blush mantled Louisa's cheeks, and involuntarily she offered the Elector her hand.

"Good-morning, Cousin Frederick," she said. "It is handsome of you to come to meet us."

"What makes you think that the Elector has come to meet us?" asked Mary pettishly. "His highness could not possibly have known that we came this way."

"True," replied Louisa, blushing, "to be sure, you could not have known it, cousin."

"Yet I intended to visit the ladies, for I wished to do myself the pleasure of paying my respects to them at Bosch."

"Go then, Sir Elector," said Princess Mary hastily. "My mother is at home, and will be rejoiced to receive a visit from your highness. Farewell then, Sir Elector, we must hurry; they are waiting for us. Come now, Louisa. You well know that we have no time to lose."

She drew the Princess forward, and Louisa followed her without resistance, silent and perplexed. But before they had gone more than a little way she stood still.

"Just wait one moment, Mary," she said hurriedly. "I want to say one word to the Elector, and will rejoin you directly." And ere Princess Mary had time to offer any opposi-

tion, Louisa had dropped her arm and turned swiftly around, crying, "Elector, allow me one word more!"

But she need not have raised her voice to call, for the Elector had stood still, looking after them. When he saw Louisa turn around he hastened to meet her, and now stood close in front of her.

"Did you call me, cousin?" he asked, and his looks expressed so much ardor of feeling that Louisa, quite abashed, cast down her eyes.

"Yes, cousin," she softly answered, "I called you, for I thought——"

"Well?" asked the Elector, smiling as she still hesitated, "what did your highness think, or, rather, what will you have the goodness to let me know of your thoughts?"

"I thought that you were a little displeased with me yesterday."

"Did you indeed think that, Fräulein? Then I suppose I was in your opinion justified in being displeased?"

"Yes, cousin," she said bravely, "you have a cause for displeasure, and I beg your pardon for it. You offered me your arm, which I declined, at the same time accepting the arm of the Prince of Wales. But I was only paying a wager won from me by Prince Charles. I had bound myself by promise to give him my arm during the whole walk, and not to tell any one that I granted him this favor merely in payment of a lost wager. That was the reason, cousin, why I had to decline your arm yesterday."

"Louisa, Louisa!" impatiently exclaimed Princess Mary, "do you not know that we must make haste?"

"I am coming! I am coming! Farewell, Elector, please do not be angry with me again to-day!"

She softly whispered these words, nodded to him, turned round, and with the fleet-footedness of a young antelope flew along the walk. And again the Elector stood a long time looking after her; and, as a bend of the path concealed her slender form from view, he sighed deeply.

"Fool that I was to come so late; she might have loved me, if another had not preceded me. Her eyes have the same childlike innocence of expression as when I parted from her

years ago. Why does the remembrance of that hour now revive in me for the first time, after so long slumbering in the recesses of my heart—why does it awake now and with sweet voice sing a pious song of the past? Just as the maiden of to-day, so the child once looked upon me as she gave me her hand when I bade her good-by, and said, 'Be a good man!' Oh, you sweet, innocent child, it is so hard to be a good man in this world. You should stand at my side, with your large, childlike eyes and sweet smile, and help me to become so! If I saw the world mirrored in your eyes, I might fancy it pure and spotless as yourself, and cherish an ardent desire to be led back by you to the paradise of innocence, your native home! Then she crowned me with a wreath of sweet-scented flowers, which she had destined for her favorite cow, and she did so with such angelic grace that I actually felt proud of the preference shown me, a poor child of man, over her beautiful brown cow! I should like to know if the pretty creature is still alive, and whether Louisa sometimes looks at her, and especially if she retains her taste for household affairs and fondness for country life, or if, like all the rest, she feels herself exalted above domestic duties, because she is a Princess! I should also like to know whether she prays as innocently and piously as when, haunted by evil spirits, she fled for refuge to her Cousin Ludovicka. Poor child! how you trembled, and how your little heart throbbed for anguish, and she drove you away—cruel Ludovicka drove you away, because her lover stood behind the curtain. And I was the lover, and, cruel as she, I allowed her to drive you back to your lonely chamber. You went and prayed; the evil spirits stood aloof from you, but they had power over me and—— Oh, ye sad, bitter memories! why will ye revive within, making me so sad and melancholy, and causing the old wounds of my heart to bleed afresh?"

How long he continued to move through the shady paths of the park, wrapt in his own thoughts and visions of the past, he knew not himself; he only knew that solitude and quiet did him good, that it refreshed him to listen to the whisperings of his own soul, and once more to feel something of the enthusiasm, the painful longing and the joyous disquiet of an

enamored young man. Yes, he could no longer deny it to himself, he was in love with the Princess Louisa. She had fascinated him with her amiability and grace, with her lovely composed and gentle countenance, with her noble, maidenly appearance, and her large blue eyes, at once so innocent and so intelligent. Yes, he was in love! For the first time, after long, long years, his heart was again awake, and the Elector, usually so given up to politics and Government affairs, was suddenly changed into a young man, whose every thought centered upon the woman of his choice, who was ever present to his imagination in all the charms of her loveliness. And was it actually impossible to win her? Had he really come too late?—had another won her heart? With what a radiant countenance had she hastened to meet him on his first appearance—how cordially had she welcomed him! Then why had she said to-day that she only gave her arm to the Prince of Wales yesterday in consequence of a wager—why should she care for him to know that if not——

"Well, I have found your grace at last," exclaimed a loud laughing voice behind him. "Here, then, the Elector of Brandenburg must be sought, in the deepest recesses of the park."

"And why does the Prince of Wales condescend to look for me?" asked the Elector, turning quickly around and looking into the Prince's laughing face with an air of considerable annoyance.

"Princess Amelia commissioned Prince William and myself to look for your grace and request you to join her husband while he takes his airing, for to-day Prince Frederick Henry feels quite well, and cherishes a lively desire to be with your grace. I esteem myself fortunate in being made the bearer of this message."

"I return to your highness my most humble acknowledgments, and hasten to repair to the palace."

"I beg your highness not to make such haste," said the Prince of Wales, laying his hand on the Elector's arm and detaining him. "Since fortune has favored me I would profit by this opportunity to ask the Elector of Brandenburg a question. Elector, will you permit me to put a question to you?"

"Prince of Wales, I shall be glad if I can answer it to your satisfaction."

"I thank your highness. Allow me to ask then: Have you come, as they say, simply for a political conference or to ask the hand of Princess Louisa Henrietta?"

"How can this interest your grace? What is it to you whether I came here for the furtherance of political ends or to be married?"

"Sir Elector, you reply by questioning me! But you promised to answer me, and I beg you so to do."

"Well then, your highness," said the Elector, after short reflection, fixing his eyes upon the Prince's face with an expression of defiance, "I will answer you, and acknowledge the whole truth to you. Yes, I have come to ask the hand of Princess Louisa Henrietta."

"I fancy that you have met with but little encouragement!" cried the Prince scornfully.

"Why should your highness fancy any such thing?" asked the Elector proudly; "and if I may be permitted to ask, how can my purpose of marrying my cousin, the Princess of Orange, concern the Prince of Wales?"

"Sir Elector, the Princess is my cousin as well."

"No excuse, your highness, for meddling in our personal affairs."

"*Our!*" cried the Prince passionately. "Do you already confound your affairs with those of the Princess? I claim the right of protesting against it, Sir Elector, for *I* love Princess Louisa Henrietta!"

As he thus spoke he proudly threw back his head, and a ray of deep feeling and noble fire flashed forth upon his features, enhancing the beauty of his handsome, spirited face. The Elector saw it, and it provoked him, for he felt that this face was capable of exerting a magical influence over a woman's heart.

"Ah! your highness loves Princess Louisa, but what of that?"

"What of that, sir? I should think, sir, the circumstance of my owning it to you would force you to draw an inference."

"Pardon me, sir, I draw no necessary inference."

"Sir, the princes of my house are not accustomed to love, without the certainty of a return of affection. When I owned to you that I loved the Princess, you should have understood, as a matter of course, that the Princess reciprocated my love, and then, I think, your knightly honor would have pledged you to forbear a further prosecution of your suit."

"Excuse me, your highness. Perhaps the house of Stuart entertains different ideas of knightly honor than are prevalent among us in Germany. So long as a lady is free and unengaged, any gentleman feels privileged to woo her."

"But, Sir Elector, I told you, that I had the good fortune to be loved by the Princess. How can you think of seeking her love when I tell you that it belongs to me!"

"I beg your highness's pardon, I can not admit such a claim."

"That is to say your highness does not believe that the Princess loves me?" asked the Prince, in angry, threatening tones.

The Elector smiled and looked with perfect composure into his flushed, excited countenance.

"Well, if your highness insists upon knowing my inmost thoughts, I will not withhold them. No, I do not believe that the Princess Louisa loves you—loves you so as to accept you for her husband."

"You do not believe it! I should like to know by what right you dare to doubt what I affirm?"

"By the right of reason, your highness. It would, pardon me—it would not be reasonable if the Princess, who has already completed her nineteenth year, should think of marrying a Prince who is in years still a boy."

The Prince of Wales uttered a shriek, and a deadly pallor overspread his cheeks. "Sir Elector!" he cried, in a voice trembling with rage—"Sir Elector, would you insult me?"

"By no means! I only express my opinion, and must adhere to it: a Princess of nineteen will hardly think of marrying a lad of sixteen, even though he be well grown and of precocious intellect. But now, allow me to repair to the palace,

for you yourself were pleased to tell me that I was expected there."

The Elector bowed with a cold smile, and, turning around, hurried up the avenue. For one moment the Prince stood irresolute, as if stunned by this dreadful blow hurled at once against his vanity and his heart. Then he bounded forward in wild pursuit.

"Sir Elector!" he cried, when he had overtaken him—"Sir Elector, one word more!"

"What is the pleasure of the Prince of Wales?" asked the Elector, standing still and turning his noble countenance upon the Prince.

For the second time since they had known each other their eyes met, and exchanged fierce, menacing glances.

"Did you not dare to doubt that the Princess Louisa loves me?" asked the Prince, in a voice hollow and choked by passion.

"Yes, sir, I doubt it, and have explained to you my grounds for so doing."

"Will you believe me if I give you proofs that the Princess loves me?"

"Proofs?" asked the Elector, a little surprised and hesitating.

"Yes, proofs," repeated the Prince. "For example, would you esteem it satisfactory proof if you should see the Princess Louisa come to a rendezvous of my appointment?"

"Sir, if the Princess were to do such a thing as that I should leave The Hague early to-morrow morning and abandon my suit for ever."

An expression of triumph flitted across the Prince's countenance. "You have forced me to make you the confidant of my sweetest secret," he said. "Give me your princely word that you will betray it to no one, and you will see that the Princess will accept my invitation."

"I give you my princely word," replied the Elector solemnly.

"Very well, sir, I trust to your word, and the secret of our love rests securely in your breast. Be pleased now to fix the place of meeting, and I shall notify the Princess."

"Then let it be here, in the park. At the Chinese Pavilion, where I first saw her."

"At what hour? Will not your highness have the goodness to name the hour?"

"Five o'clock, then, if you have no objection."

"Five o'clock! Allow me to remark that that is rather early, and that daylight is not favorable to an interview between lovers, because it makes it too public."

"Well, let us take a later hour!" cried the Elector. "Seven o'clock in the evening then?"

"Seven o'clock will do. You will not object, though, to my escorting the Princess there. The pavilion is quite a long way off, and the Princess does not like to walk through the park alone at so late an hour. I know that from experience. Therefore, at seven o'clock Princess Louisa and I will come to the Chinese Pavilion, and if you will take the trouble to station yourself somewhere in the neighborhood you shall see us enter the pavilion together."

"I shall be punctually on the spot!" cried the Elector. "But one stipulation I must make. I said that if I saw the Princess repair to a rendezvous of your appointment, I would leave The Hague early the next morning."

"Yes your highness said so."

"And I now retract my word, in so far as that I insist upon first having an interview with *you*, Sir Prince of Wales. In the boldness and presumption of your spirit you insulted me the other day by speaking words of unwarrantable insolence. You think, then, Sir Prince, that it would be a most advantageous match on my side to marry a Queen of Sweden. I shall not leave The Hague until you have proved to me, sword in hand, that you are qualified to give an opinion upon the interests of the Elector of Brandenburg."

"I actually believe you do me the honor to challenge me to fight a duel!" said the Prince of Wales. "Lo! the Elector of Brandenburg has now the goodness to treat me as a man of whom satisfaction may be demanded sword in hand. Your views have changed suddenly, and I have grown rapidly old in your eyes. Have I rightly understood you, sir, is this a challenge?"

"Yes, it is a challenge," cried the Elector, his voice tremulous with passion. "At seven o'clock this evening I shall await you and the Princess at the Chinese Pavilion. But early to-morrow morning, at the same place and the same hour, I shall expect you alone and armed, to make good your assertion that it would be so much to my advantage to marry the Queen of Sweden."

"I accept, but beseech you not to forget that you have given me your word to keep our secret, and betray it to no one, not even the Princess herself. You will therefore keep perfectly quiet, when you have seen us enter the pavilion?"

"Be without uneasiness, sir; I shall keep my word. To-morrow morning, then, early, at seven o'clock."

"At seven o'clock. What weapon does your highness select?"

"Whichever you prefer and use most skillfully."

"It is a matter of indifference to me, for I am practiced in all. But in this case I prefer the dagger, for it makes least noise; and for the Princess's sake, I would naturally like to keep our duel as secret as the rendezvous."

"Let us use daggers, then. Early to-morrow morning, without seconds, at the Chinese Pavilion, provided that——"

"That Princess Louisa comes this evening at seven o'clock, would you say? Let your mind be relieved of all uneasiness, your highness; both rendezvous shall take place."

"Good, and now, as we have nothing more to say to each other, I take my leave."

The Elector turned his back upon the Prince without deigning to bestow upon him a parting salutation, and, with head haughtily erect, strode swiftly up the avenue.

Prince Charles looked after him with smiling countenance and beaming eyes. "Which of us is the greater child now?" he asked scornfully of himself. "Is it not childish to call me out to fight a duel on account of a rendezvous? Oh, that rendezvous! First of all, I must contrive some way of bringing it about, and that, I fear, will cost some trouble and perplexity. Yet already I have a glimmering idea of a way by which I can contrive to effect my scheme. I have in contemplation a little comedy of errors, whose conception Shakes-

peare himself might envy me. What saidst thou Shakespeare? Yes, thou art right. I will venture all, for I love thee, Louisa, and—I hate that proud, supercilious Elector, coming here with Cæsar's assumption: *Veni, vidi, vici!*"

VI.—The Elopement.

"You have come at last, Charles. My heavens! how long you have kept me waiting!" exclaimed Prince William of Orange to his young brother-in-law, as toward noon of the same day that young gentleman entered his chamber. "I thought you had totally forgotten me and left me in the lurch. Good heavens, Charles! how can anybody be so slow and hard-hearted!"

"Say rather, dear brother, how can anybody be so much in love and so impatient. As if the whole world turned upon your love, and as if we other poor mortals had nothing else to do but to fly upon your errands."

"Just tell me this; have you seen Mary? Did you give her my letter? Does she consent?"

"I saw her. I gave her your letter. But before I answer your third question I must learn what you have been doing meanwhile. Have you been with your father? Did you openly avow to him your ardent desire to live with your young wife?"

"I have been with my father, but I found my mother there, and the very instant I broached this subject she commanded silence, for the physicians had strictly forbidden the introduction of exciting topics."

"She is naturally a most tender and conscientious nurse," said Prince Charles, shrugging his shoulders, "for every day of your father's life prolongs by so much her term of supremacy and influence. But did you not attempt to melt your mother's stony heart?"

"I did. I besought her to grant me an audience. I confessed to her my boundless love for Mary, telling her that

I could not survive separation from her, that I would be lost, miserable, comfortless, if she did not revoke her cruel decision. All was in vain. 'Men do not die of broken hearts,' said my mother, and when I swore in desperation to go with Mary to France, she smiled and said she would take care to prevent that. If I did not behave myself in a rational manner, she would deal with me as I deserved: confine me to my room, and place two sentinels before the door until the Princess had fairly set off."

"And she is the woman to execute such a threat!" said Prince Charles, laughing.

"To be sure she is, my friend. I needed only to look in her flashing eyes and her energetic face to feel convinced of that. Yes, she would have locked me up like a disobedient boy, and our whole plan would have come to nought. I reflected upon this, and therefore seemed finally to acquiesce in the cogency of my mother's reasoning, and consented that the Princess Mary should accompany her mother to France, there to remain until the term shall have fully expired, when our marriage will be consummated according to the marriage compact. Now you know all: answer my question: does Mary consent to elope with me?"

"Yes, she consents."

Prince William cried aloud for joy, with passionate tenderness flung both arms around his brother-in-law's neck, and stormily pressed him to his heart.

"For heaven's sake! I am not the Princess Mary," said Charles, laughing. "Keep your tenderness for a more auspicious occasion, and hear what I have to say to you."

"I am listening, dear brother-in-law, I am all ear."

"This evening at six o'clock my sister will expect you to be under her window, and like an angel will descend from above to you, or, to express myself prosaically, will come down to you by means of a rope ladder."

"At six o'clock? Is not that very early? Should we not rather await the darkness of night?"

"My dear brother-in-law, it is dark at six o'clock in October, as you seem not to have observed, especially now when there is no moonshine. You will be no more visible at six

than at seven o'clock. But you must be off as early as possible, that by eleven you may be beyond the reach of pursuit and discovery."

"Why so, my sage Mentor?"

"Because, my beloved pupil, my mother, Queen Henrietta, occupies the same bedroom as my two sisters, and it is her rule never to let the young ladies sleep alone. This sleeping room is quite near the Queen's drawing room, being only separated from it by a small passage upon which open two doors, one leading to the Queen's drawing room, the other to the chamber of her lady's maid. My mother has now fixed habits, from which she never deviates. She remains in her sitting room, either reading or writing to my father, until eleven o'clock. The princesses, however, are allowed to retire earlier, if they wish it. But the Queen never enters her sleeping room until eleven, even if indisposed; and before going to rest, with motherly solicitude, always draws aside the bed curtains to assure herself that her daughters are enjoying tranquil slumbers. Do you now, dear brother-in-law, comprehend the necessity of escaping as early as possible?"

"Of course, because at eleven our flight must be discovered."

"Yes, because at eleven begins the fifth act of this comedy, the act of developments and explanations. I assure you, my friend, it will open in a painfully stormy manner, for my mother will probably take it no less to heart than yours. I believe it is the only point on which our gracious mammas cordially sympathize. From the bottom of their hearts both would gladly see this marriage dissolved."

"What? Your mother too?" said Prince William bitterly.

"Certainly. This alliance never met her approval, and she only acquiesced in deference to her husband's views. But now it would please her extremely to have my sister unmarried. Mary is young, beautiful, and fascinating in her manners. At Paris she will find a King, a few years younger than herself, indeed, but with whom she might conclude just such a marriage as she had previously done with you. It would be a brilliant match, and who knows what will happen if she

pleases King Louis XIV and the regent, his mother? Your union has hitherto been merely one of form, and consequently is not indissoluble. Princess Mary will then return to the bosom of the only true Church, and the Pope will assuredly have the complaisance to pronounce her earlier marriage invalid, as also to bless the new matrimonial engagement."

"For God's sake forbear, else you will drive me to madness!" murmured William breathlessly, with pale, trembling lips. "God be thanked, Mary is not going to France; she will stay here in spite of both our ambitious, domineering mothers. Tell me, dear Charles, what I have to do. You must act for me, and make all the needful preparations."

"Yes, if you were to act in person all would be in vain! Your shrewd mother is, of course, keeping a vigilant watch upon you, and at the very first sign of peculiarity in your movements she would carry her threat into execution, and keep you imprisoned until Mary has left. I have, therefore, acted for you, and I think you will be satisfied with my arrangements. Little remains to be done. All depends upon your preventing this journey of your little wife's to France, and insisting upon your right to keep her with you. My mother can not well defer her journey, for the packet boat which is to take her to Havre is ready to sail, and, moreover, she has paid her passage, and our funds are not in a condition to admit of losing so much money. My mother will be obliged, therefore, to set sail with her younger daughter and retinue, and I only will be left to search for my sister and then follow my family to France. You need only conceal yourselves for a few days somewhere in the neighborhood, and take care that your being found again be attended with such *éclat* that your mother will be forced to admit that you are actually married, and can no longer be separated. It is therefore best to go no farther than Amsterdam, and take up your quarters in the castle there. You will arrive there before daybreak; the steward will open the doors for you, and you can tell him that you have come to spend a few days in your good town of Amsterdam, and that your attendants will arrive early the next morning. In the morning the glad tidings will have spread over the whole city. You will have to ride

through the streets in an open carriage, to receive the congratulations of the populace, and all will be done. Your marriage will be a *fait accompli* which your mother can no longer deny. She will put a good face on the matter, and probably pay you a little visit at Amsterdam and fetch you back to The Hague."

"Would that my mother's little visit were over!" sighed Prince William, with an air that made the Prince of Wales laugh.

"Do not think of that now, but of your departure hence," he said. "First of all, write a touching and respectful letter to your parents, entreating their forgiveness. Leave this letter, addressed to your mother, on your writing desk. Then provide yourself with money and such like indispensables, and, above all things, repair punctually to my rooms at Bosch at six o'clock. For the rest, the rope ladder and equipage I shall provide, which will give me enough to do until the appointed hour arrives. Farewell then, brother-in-law, until we meet again at six o'clock precisely."

And the Prince of Wales left his brother-in-law, that he might do all that he had promised for the execution of his cunningly devised scheme; but while he made arrangements for the flight of the lovers, he never for an instant lost sight of his own affairs, and the rendezvous in the Chinese Pavilion occupied just as much of his thoughts as the elopement to Amsterdam. He observed everything closely, and when, after long rambling and taking many needful precautions, he at last returned to Bosch, his mother's temporary residence, he made his faithful valet give him an account of all that had happened there during the day. The youngest Princess had been with her Majesty, who had packed up all her valuables and completed her preparations for her journey. Princess Mary, however, had kept her own room, Princess Louisa of Orange having spent the whole day with her, and only set out for The Hague an hour ago. Princess Mary had accompanied the Princess Louisa to her carriage, her eyes were red with weeping, and when she embraced the Princess for the last time she had sobbed aloud, and the Princess Louisa had wept too. Then the Princess Mary had again

retired to her room, and had excused herself to her Majesty for not appearing at table, on the plea of suffering from an excruciating headache.

The Prince of Wales heard this news with much satisfaction, and forthwith repaired to his sister Mary's chamber. She lay upon the divan, her head buried in its silken cushions, weeping and lamenting aloud, without paying any heed to approaching footsteps. Prince Charles made a rapid circuit of the apartment, looked behind every curtain, under every piece of furniture, and then stepped close up to the divan on which his sister lay.

"Mary, we are alone, no spies are watching us!"

Immediately her laments ceased and she sprang quickly up. "Thank God, brother, that you have come at last," she whispered. "I was so uneasy."

"And time was so long, was it not, and I am such a slow, cruel creature? Oh, yes, I have had full experience of such forms of speech during my recent interview with your husband, and therefore will excuse you a repetition. Oh, you poor lovers! groping about in the night of illusion, how bitterly will you be disappointed when the sun of knowledge rises and the mists of enthusiasm vanish!"

"That will never be!" cried Mary with warmth. "We shall always love each other just as ardently as we do now. We will never be undeceived, and ever cherish our illusions."

"Oh, yes, of course, so they talk at your age."

"At *my* age! And how much older are you then, my Prince of Wales?"

"Almost two years, my Princess of Orange, and two years of bitter experiences have they been, believe me. But let us now talk of more pressing matters, for the hour of separation is at hand, and we have still much to do."

"Oh dear, oh dear! I am frightened already! If our plans should miscarry and we be discovered! If my strict mother-in-law should catch us, I believe I should melt like wax beneath her burning eyes!"

"Compose yourself, Mary; she will not catch you, for I have guarded against all contingencies. But attend to me

for a little while, and be pleased to answer my questions. Have you taken your final leave of the Princess Louisa?"

"Yes, brother Charles. Poor good Louisa! She melted into tears, and I, too, wept bitterly, I knew not wherefore."

"You did not betray anything of your plan, and she has no suspicion of your approaching flight?"

"God forbid! Betray anything to her! She would have forthwith done everything in the world to thwart us in our adventure! What a pious, obedient, and humble little person she is! She exhorted me with tears in her eyes to be submissive to our parent's will, and to commit all to our dear Heavenly Father! Ah! if Louisa had a suspicion of what is going on, she would report to her mother on the spot. I am convinced of that, and therefore kept my counsel."

"Well done, little sister. Now be kind enough to allow me to dictate a note to you. Have the goodness to take this seat."

He led his sister to her escritoire and placed pen and paper before her.

"What am I to write then?" asked Mary, smiling. "Mayhap a letter to my sweet mother-in-law?"

"Ask no questions, sister, only write; we have no time to lose, and this affair signifies little to you. Are you ready, dear sister? May I begin?"

"Commence, I am on the *qui vive* to hear."

"Only, be not so intent upon hearing as to forget to write. So, heading, 'My dear Louisa!'"

"Oh, I am to write to Louisa? Good heavens, what can I have to write to *her* about?"

"You shall soon hear. Only write:

"My dear Louisa: I write you these lines, just as I am in the act of taking a very rash step. Louisa, it almost broke my heart that I could not tell you everything, and I have begged my dear husband until he has allowed me to write you at least this last farewell, and make this request of you: if you would see us once more before our departure, if you would give your brother one last farewell, then come to the Chinese Pavilion at seven o'clock exactly. There you will

receive the last greetings of your brother William and your unhappy sister Mary. I long to see you once again, for I repent so much of having deceived you to-day. We part with light hearts from all but you and brother Charles; we grieve to bid you farewell, for you two are the only ones who truly love us. Come, sister, come punctually to the Chinese Pavilion at seven o'clock. But be silent as the grave, if you would not be responsible for the death of YOUR MARY."

"I do not understand a word of all this," sighed Mary, when she had written to the end.

"That is not at all necessary. You will understand all in good time. But do not lay your pen aside yet, *chère sœur*, for here is a second sheet of paper. Be so good as to copy the note I dictated to you, only direct it to the Prince of Wales instead of to the Princess."

"So be it, but you will explain to me when I have finished what——"

"Not then, but hereafter. Only see, the clock now points to half-past five. We must hurry sister, or all is lost. Please write."

The Princess made no response, but began to write rapidly, then, at an intimation from her brother, folded up both letters, wrote the addresses, and sealed them.

Prince Charles took both letters, broke the seal of the one directed to himself, and then thrust it into the breast pocket of his velvet coat.

"The other letter, Charles? What is to be done with that?" asked the Princess inquisitively.

"You shall learn directly. Just wait one minute." He opened the door leading into the antechamber, and finding his valet standing without, bade him enter.

"Go immediately, James," he said, "and carry this letter from the Princess of Orange to Princess Louisa Henrietta at The Hague. But take good care to give it into the hands of none but the Princess herself."

"Your highness, your order shall be obeyed."

"The greatest dispatch is required. How soon can you get there, James?"

The valet looked at the clock. "It now wants a quarter of six. I shall be there a quarter past six, your highness."

"That is to say, you will run the whole way like a hunted stag?"

"I shall run, most gracious sir."

And the valet swiftly vanished through the antechamber door.

"Now, sister," said the Prince of Wales gravely, "the parting hour has come, and we must take leave of one another. I have only to attach this rope ladder to your window."

He drew a package from his pocket and unwrapped it.

"Ah, let me see!" cried Mary. "I have never seen a rope ladder. Ah, how ingeniously these silken cords are interlinked, and how securely all is joined together. Oh, I ought not to be afraid, for these steps will not give way. And yet, brother, my heart beats as though it would burst."

"Fear nothing, sister, you are quite safe. This ladder is perfectly true. I have myself tried each step, and proved them all to be strong and firm."

The Prince of Wales now made fast the ladder to a projection below the window, and in the midst of some parting injunctions to Princess Mary, suddenly paused. "Hark!" he said, "the clock is striking six. The decisive moment has arrived—the moment for action."

"Alas! I am filled with anguish!" sighed the Princess. "I feel dreadfully alarmed, and all at once this adventure, which has hitherto amused me, strikes me now as quite a serious affair, and I know not why, but I begin to be ashamed of having undertaken it."

"That is to say, sister, you are afraid of venturing upon the rope ladder—nothing more. You can still draw back if you choose. If you repent, and find it more to your taste to go with our mother to France, there to eat the bread of charity, say so, and I will loosen the ladder, go down into the park to your husband, who is waiting for you under your window, and tell him that you prefer following your mother to staying here with him."

"No, I do not prefer it!" exclaimed the Princess warmly. "No, I will not go with my mother to France, to beg for help

and protection *there,* when I can be a free, honored, and happy Princess *here* at my husband's side."

"You have made up your mind, then, Mary?"

"Yes, I have made up my mind decidedly. You say, brother, my husband is waiting for me below? Well, he shall not wait in vain; I will go to him."

And with flushed cheeks and resolute carriage the Princess approached the window.

"Not so fast, *chère sœur,* not so fast," whispered the Prince. "I am to go before, to show you, in the first place, that the ladder is trustworthy, and, in the second, to help your husband to hold it firmly for your descent. *Au revoir,* then, fair Princess; we shall meet below. As soon as I have gained the ground I shall clap my hands three times as a signal for you to commence your journey."

He swung himself up into the window seat, once more nodded encouragingly to his sister, and then vanished into the darkness. Princess Mary leaned far out, saw the shadow slowly glide down, heard the creaking and groaning of the silken cords, and in breathless suspense expected every minute to hear the cry of the falling and the rending of the ladder. But no. The ladder stopped moving, and from below she heard the appointed signal.

"Now!" she murmured, with trembling lips and blanched cheeks—"now!"

One moment more she stood still hesitating, and her large hazel eyes turned toward the door leading to her mother's apartments.

"Oh, my mother!" she whispered, "who knows whether we shall ever meet again, and I have not bid you good-by; I have not received your parting blessing, have——"

Again the clapping of hands was heard from the garden. "I am coming, yes, I am coming," whispered Mary. "Ah, I will think of nothing but that my husband is there waiting for me."

She sprang courageously upon the chair which stood beside the window, thence swung herself up to the window sill, with both hands held to the cross piece, and cautiously and lightly began the descent. The ladder oscillated, and her

heart beat so as to take away her breath; but she heard her husband's voice speaking words of cheer and encouragement, and that strengthened her to descend more quickly. Now two arms encircled her and lifted her down from the ladder, pressing her fondly to a loudly beating heart, and a beloved voice whispered words of ardent gratitude and warm devotion in her ear.

"Away now, away!" urged Prince Charles, at their side. "Good heavens! just be rational for one quarter of an hour longer, and you will have a whole lifetime left for the indulgence of your folly. Come, come!"

"Whither, brother?" whispered Mary.

"To the carriage, my romantic sister. It is hardly two hundred paces distant, at the entrance to the park."

"Two hundred paces! But my feet burn as if they were on fire, and pain me very much. I can not move a step."

"I will carry you, darling! Come to my arms! I shall bear you in my arms through life, and never let your beloved feet touch the rough ground."

The Prince of Orange lifted the delicate, sylphlike form of his girlish young wife in his strong arms, and bore her with vigorous step down the avenue. Prince Charles walked silently beside them until they had gained the outer gate of the park. This he opened and gave a thrice-repeated whistle. Forthwith was heard the muffled sound of carriage wheels, moving slowly over the graveled walk. "Stop!" was Prince Charles's order, and he opened the coach door himself, although the lackey had sprung obsequiously down from his seat beside the driver.

"Get in, sister," said the Prince, "and may the God of love protect you."

"Farewell, brother; one parting kiss!"

"And accept the assurance of my undying gratitude, dear brother-in-law. You I have to thank for the happiness of my whole life; you enabled me to find the requisite courage to break loose from the despotic will which threatened to enthral me. You freed me from the chains of moral slavery, and if ever I become a strong and independent sovereign, you it will be who has made me so! Take my hand, and my word

for it that I will recompense you to the utmost of my ability."

"It may be, brother, that I shall soon have to claim this promise," said the Prince of Wales, sighing. "My future does not lie clear and bright before me like yours. But who knows, perhaps—— But enough of words. Be off now. Gallop off, coachman, to Amsterdam!"

The coachman applied his whip to the horses and the carriage rolled rapidly down the road. The Prince looked after it until it disappeared in the surrounding darkness, and the rolling of the wheels was no longer heard.

"And now," he said, in loud, determined tone—"now the hour has come which is to settle my fate as well. God of love, stand by me, and let not my trust in thee be brought to shame! Hark! already the castle clock is striking the half hour after six. I shall not have time to go down to The Hague. The Chinese Pavilion is nearer, and I shall station myself somewhere in its neighborhood. Will she come?—will she have the courage to go through the park alone by night? Yes, she will, for she has a brave heart, and will not shrink from performing a deed of love. Yes, she will come, and my sly James will see her, and a half hour later hand the note in question to Princess Amelia. Verily, I play a rash game, and if I lose, nothing is left to me but either to cast myself into the sea or to accompany my mother across the sea to France. Which course shall I take? I dread—the latter!"

VII.—The Chinese Pavilion.

Princess Louisa had just received Mary's enigmatical note, and in helpless terror pondered upon its contents. The mysterious language in which it was couched and its dark hints filled her affectionate heart with infinite anxiety, and she knew not what these farewell words of Mary's could signify.

After a long soliloquy she thought that she had unraveled the mystery. Her brother must have made up his mind to

follow his wife to France. They wished to give her a last farewell, and she could not turn a deaf ear to their request. No, she must hasten to them, and strive by the tenderest appeals to turn them aside from a project which she felt sure would cause her beloved father's death. She slipped the ominous billet into her pocket and prepared to set forth. "No one will think it singular that I should go down into the park," she said, as she hastily threw a scarf around her shoulders and covered her head with a veil, "for I sometimes go to the dairy in the evening, to see whether they have made things secure for the night, and yet—I would rather go down the private staircase, and enter the park through the little gate where no sentinel is stationed. Ah! if I were not obliged to go alone! If only——"

For one minute she paused and a vivid blush suffused her cheeks. "It is true," she whispered, "*he* would protect me, and at *his* side how securely I might walk along! *He* would not betray me if I were to confide this secret to him, but second me in my efforts to deter my brother and sister from taking this violent measure. Oh, he is so wise, so eloquent, nobody can resist him! I will have him called. I will place myself and my secret under his protection, and implore his assistance."

She made a few steps forward, but faltered and stood still. "No," said she, slowly shaking her brown curls—"no, I will not call him. He does not care for me—he takes no interest in me. Not once has he asked for me to-day, although I foolishly volunteered to apologize to him this morning. Even at table he did not address a single observation to me, and if our eyes accidentally met, he looked at me so angrily that his glance seemed to pierce me to the soul, and I could have cried aloud for very agony! No, I shall not call him—*him* least of all! I shall go alone!"

She no longer hesitated, a cheerful determination took possession of her whole being and filled her with strength and spirit. Hurriedly she left her apartment, saying to her maid, whom she met in the antechamber, that she would be absent but for a little while. She speedily made her way into the park. It was a gloomy evening, not a moonbeam illumined the dark-

ness, and only the stars shone clearly in the evening sky. To them Princess Louisa lifted her eyes as she traversed the broad space leading into the dark avenue.

"Attend me, ye stars, and watch over me! Bright witnesses of God's unceasing care for his creatures, smile down upon me, and inspire my poor timid heart with courage!"

And it seemed to her as if the stars sparkled more brilliantly, and the breeze sighing among the foliage seemed to whisper to her that God was near to sustain and protect her by his presence.

Courageously she moved forward, borne onward by the strength of her inward emotion, by the burning love of her stout, true heart. She had a duty to fulfill—a sacred duty! She would restrain her brother and sister from entering upon a course fraught with danger; she would guard her beloved father from grief and peril of death! There was no longer in her any timidity or maidenly shrinking. God watched over her. Had the Elector Frederick William thus seen her, could he have looked into her clear eye and noble, open countenance, he must have read her pure soul as depicted upon every feature, and his heart must have been filled with faith and confidence. But he did not see her. He had long wandered among the solitary walks of the park, bewailing the fate which seemed to be about to doom him to a second disappointment. "O Louisa, Louisa! has *your* face, too, deceived me?—was that appearance of maidenly innocence only a mask assumed to hide the wonted levity of your sex? I could weep to think that you are but a poor deluded woman —*you* whom your Maker had destined for a model of feminine truth and purity!" Thus absorbed in melancholy reflections, gathering gloom warned him that the hour for the hated rendezvous was at hand, and he bent his steps toward the pavilion, which was even now visible on the other side of the Chinese garden, with its white walls and two lighted windows. He seated himself on the marble bench, in the arbor close beside the entrance. The projecting pillars of the little portal cast their dark shadows over his form, and no careless passer-by would have observed him. There he sat, enveloped in his mantle, looking out into the night, and

listening to every sound that broke the stillness of the evening hour, and amid the pains and conflicts of which his soul was now called to undergo, unknown and unsuspected by himself, there sprang up within him the genial blossoms of a new sensation, and a new era of thought and being.

"When Mahadoh loves," say the Hindoo Brahmins—"when Mahadoh loves, tears fill the eye of the god. These tears the lotus flower receives and bears down to earth, and each of these tears, so soon as it touches the earth, becomes a human heart, instinct with the divine essence. And therefore the human heart is full of love and woe, for man's love springs from the tears of a god!" The Elector thought not of these words of the Brahmins, but he experienced their import as he sat, with clinched hands and palpitating heart, looking out through the darkness for her whom his heart had so long deferred looking for and yet found so soon. Man's love is indeed an emanation from deity. It burned not then in the heart of that frivolous young Prince, who, with head thrown back and little step, came gliding through the park. He had taken a short cut, in order to be at the place of appointment in good time. Like a serpent he had crept along swiftly and noiselessly through narrow paths and densest shrubbery. Now he stood at the entrance to the avenue which led directly from the palace, and waited for Louisa. Oh, he knew her well; he knew that *she* would take no bypaths and secret ways, but come fearlessly by the broadest and most direct road! Then he turned and looked toward the pavilion. "Is that haughty Elector already there? You would mortify me, you petty little German Prince! I shall have my revenge, and aim my blow straight at your heart; then I shall carry off in triumph the bride you had thought to win!"

And now he gazed down the avenue. "Will she come?—can I have miscalculated?"

It seemed to him as if he heard approaching steps, as if he saw a form advancing along the avenue. Yes, he had not been deceived—yes, it was Princess Louisa!

He hastened to meet her, joyfully, gratefully.

"Who is that?" asked Louisa, in a distinct, courageous tone of voice.

"It is I, cousin," whispered the Prince of Wales. "Ah! I thought I should meet with you upon this sorrowful pilgrimage. I suspected that they had called you as well as myself."

"Did you, too, receive a letter, inviting you to come to the Chinese Pavilion?"

"Yes, a letter from my sister Mary. She writes that she and her husband are about to set out on a long journey, and that she longed to embrace me once more before her departure."

"The very same thing that she wrote to me. Oh, let us make haste, cousin! Oh dear, why did I not meet you earlier? Why did you not come for me? I felt so much afraid coming through that dreary, lonely avenue."

"Cousin, I did not know that they had asked you to come here, and the letter enjoined the strictest secrecy upon me."

"Upon me too! Oh, the poor, foolish children! Oh, cousin, you will join your entreaties to mine, and urge them to give up this fearful project. It would be the death of my poor, sick father, if they were to run away! Oh, cousin, you will help me to prevent it, will you not?"

"I will do anything that you desire of me, Cousin Louisa, for you well know you are mistress of my head, my heart, and my will. Take my arm and let us hasten to seek them."

Without resistance the Princess took his arm and moved rapidly forward through the Chinese garden to the pavilion.

"Only see, there is a light in the little parlor," said Louisa anxiously; "they are there already waiting for us!"

"Yes, they are there already, as it seems. Come, my noble, *kind* cousin!"

He spoke the last words in a loud, tender voice, for his sharp, peering eyes had detected the dark shadow near the portal, and he knew that the Elector was there lurking in the corner. A wild, triumphant joy took possession of his heart; he had succeeded in taking his revenge upon the proud man who had humbled him. He would now make this revenge more keenly felt, and the spying Elector should not merely

see, but hear. They were now quite near enough for him to hear their voices and distinguish their words.

"Cousin," said the Prince, in a tone of passionate tenderness, "what an angel you are, to come here in spite of the lateness of the hour! Love, tender desire pleaded with you to make this sacrifice, and you were forthwith ready to offer it."

"Who could have resisted such an appeal?" was her soft rejoinder. "Who could have turned a deaf ear to the call of such love? I obeyed it, as was my duty, and——"

"Come, Louisa," quickly interposed the Prince, "the door is open; let us enter the temple of love!"

They glided into the pavilion, and all was over!

Yes, all was over! The Elector issued from his place of concealment, his heart swelling with indignation and grief. He had heard all. All was over! She herself had said that she could not resist the call of his love—that it was her duty to follow it! All was over now—all! He hated, he despised the Princess! If she could love that frivolous Prince of Wales, she was not worthy of his love or his regret! Away with every remembrance of her! Every sigh for her would be a sin! She had made her choice! Well! might she be happy!

Furiously he thus spoke to himself, not believing that he felt pain—nothing but indignation and wrath! It was so ridiculous, so humiliating, to be supplanted by a boy! And this was the maiden who had been held up as a model of virtue—this foolish, loving girl, who even granted her lover a secret rendezvous!

"I should like to know how long they will stay here," he said, gnashing his teeth. "I am curious to know when the fair maid of Orange will return home, and whether it is possible in this well-ordered household to come in and out without attracting attention. Yes, I shall learn, I will wait here until they come out of that cursed house, and I shall follow them to the palace, for I am curious to see when she will return." And the Elector, who had in fact persuaded himself that it was curiosity, not love or passion, that prompted him to tarry longer, resumed his seat upon the marble bench.

Princess Louisa, meanwhile, had followed the Prince of Wales into the little lighted parlor. No one came to meet them, no one was visible.

"They have not come yet," said Louisa artlessly; "we shall have to wait."

"In the transports of their love they give no heed to time," returned the Prince of Wales, looking at the clock. "It is past seven o'clock already; they should certainly have been here by this time."

Secretly he said to himself: "It is past seven, and consequently James has handed my note to Princess Amelia and ere this she is on her way here. Let us use our time well then, and prepare for the *dénouement*."

He approached the Princess, who had sunk upon the divan, and was looking down silently and sadly.

"Louisa," he whispered, "it grieves me to see you so grave and quiet."

"Can I be otherwise?" she asked, sighing. "If we do not succeed in dissuading our brother and sister from taking this rash step, what will become of us? What will my mother say? How will my poor, feeble father bear it? O heavens! if they would only come! This solitude is frightful!"

"Solitude!" he repeated despairingly. "Am I so utterly insignificant that you call yourself alone when I am at your side?"

"A truce to such talk, cousin," she cried impatiently. "You see I am in deadly anxiety. If they would only come!"

"They will come, cousin. Are you so afraid to stay alone with me?"

"Afraid of what?" she asked, astonished. "Oh no, cousin, I am not afraid to be alone with you; it only fills me with anxiety not to find them here. Suppose they have changed their minds and thought it too dangerous to venture here? Cousin, suppose they have gone without bidding us farewell?"

"Be comforted," he implored. "They will not do that. Why should they have urged both you and me so pressingly to meet them if they intended to go without seeing us?"

"Your are right, Prince," she sighed. "But it is so painful to have to wait here!"

"Indeed, if any one were to see us here," said he, smiling —"if it were found out that you had been alone with me in the Chinese Pavilion at so late an hour of the evening, it would furnish scandalmongers with fine material for gossip."

"Oh, I did not think of that, and it is not that which occasions me uneasiness," said she. "Who could think any harm of my being here alone with you? You are almost like my younger brother."

"Almost, but not quite, Louisa. Look in my eyes. Do you not read there other than a brother's love? Ah, Louisa, believe that I love you boundlessly."

And he fell on one knee, seized her hand, and looked at her with flaming, consuming glances. Louisa shuddered, and all at once came over her the consciousness of the dangerous, ambiguous position in which she had been placed through her sister's delay.

"Stand up, cousin," she said sternly. "Leave off this child's play; it is sadly unsuited to the occasion. I came here to bid my brother and sister farewell, and am not in a state of mind to listen to your follies. Rise then, Prince, and let us seriously and rationally consider what we have to do."

"No, I will not rise," he cried passionately; "I will remain before you on my knees, and never rise until you give me one word of encouragement! O Louisa! be moved by my love, my grief! Consider that you are the only hope of my life! Give me your dear hand, and I shall esteem myself amply recompensed for all that I have lost, for your heart is the only kingdom over which I care to reign!"

"You will not rise, then?" asked Louisa indignantly. "You are cruel and selfish enough to torture and torment me, although you see my heart is wrung with anguish! Hear what I have to say to you now, Prince of Wales! If you do not instantly get up and keep silence with regard to your own feelings, which have nothing to do with my presence here, I shall leave the room directly, and await outside the door the arrival of our friends."

She approached the door with such a firm step and

haughty, energetic mien that the Prince felt that she would execute her threat. He therefore arose from his knees and stepped quickly up to her.

"Stay, Princess," he said; "I will be silent, for it is not worth while to repeat to you what you have already known so long."

He held out his hand, and the Princess allowed him to lead her back into the middle of the room.

"But do you understand the meaning of this long delay?" she asked, full of distress. "Could they have gone without coming here? Can it be possible that they have given up their design, and—— Oh, what is that?" she exclaimed, breaking off in the midst of her sentence as her eye accidentally fell upon the window opening on the garden. "What means that light?"

She hurried to the window, followed by the Prince of Wales.

"I see four torchbearers coming in this direction," said he. "The long-expected are come at last! But how singular, that they should have themselves lighted here! An original mode of flying, truly!"

Louisa paid no attention to him. Of all his words she heard only these, "The long-expected are come at last." She felt comforted and strengthened, and smilingly looked out upon the approaching party. Now the torchbearers stood before the pavilion, fronting both sides of the little portal. She saw two figures advance and near the door.

"They come, they are here!" she joyfully exclaimed, withdrawing from the window. The Prince of Wales hurried up to her, seized her hand, holding it fast within his own.

"Come, Louisa, let us go to meet our brother and sister."

She did not know that the Prince of Wales had taken her hand; she thought only of those whom she was waiting for, and only looked toward the door with loudly beating heart.

VIII.—The Confession.

And now the door opened and a tall lady entered, followed by a gentleman.

Louisa uttered a scream of terror, and tottered back as if she had seen an apparition. Those who had just entered were not Prince William and his young bride, but the Princess Amelia and her brother, the Prince of Solms.

A pause ensued, a long, breathless pause. Princess Amelia seemed not less surprised to find her daughter here than Princess Louisa was to see her mother step in, in Princess Mary's stead. The Prince of Wales drew himself up to his full height and looked upon the Princess with calm, proud dignity. The Prince of Solms alone with cool equanimity surveyed the apartment and all those present.

"Do I find you here, Louisa?" at last exclaimed Princess Amelia, in a tone of painful astonishment. "Are you, too, in league with them, and have you lent them your aid in their adventurous undertaking?"

"No, your grace, no!" cried Louisa, "I know nothing of it, I——"

"For God's sake!" whispered Prince Charles anxiously, "would you betray our brother and sister? Would you cause their deaths?"

"Well, Louisa," asked her mother sternly, "where are they? Are they concealed in this house?"

"I do not know, most gracious mother," stammered Louisa, "I——"

"Louisa," whispered the Prince, "now is the time to prove your sisterly affection. You must save them by sacrificing yourself!"

He had all this while held the Princess's hand clasped within his own, now he tightened his grasp and drew her forward, straight up to her mother.

"There is no longer any use in dissembling," said he; "we must make up our minds to acknowledge the truth, my dear Louisa."

"What, would you betray them?" murmured she, turning pale.

"I would betray our secret, and avow the immeasurable love which has led to all these errors," cried the Prince aloud, and as he turned with a soft smile to Princess Amelia he asked, "Most noble aunt, whom did you expect to find here?"

"Whom but Prince William and Princess Mary?" asked the Princess. "I have received my son's letter, and especially the message that I would find the fugitives at this spot."

"You have been deceived, most gracious lady," exclaimed Prince Charles eagerly. "No one is here save we two."

"You two? And what means *your* presence here, if I may ask?"

"It means!" cried the Prince, retaining Louisa's hand and advancing still nearer to the Princess Amelia, while he gracefully bent one knee before her—"it means that we implore your grace's forgiveness and blessing upon our love!"

Princess Louisa shuddered and a slight scream escaped her lips. Horror-stricken she gazed sometimes at the Prince of Wales, sometimes across at the door through which Elector Frederick William had just entered. She had recognized him, in spite of the cloak which enveloped his form, in spite of the broad slouched hat which he had drawn low over his forehead so as to shroud his whole face from view. Yes, it was no other than he, and *he* was to be a witness of this humiliation, so terrible to the shrinking delicacy of her sensitive nature.

"My blessing upon your love?" asked Princess Amelia. "This is not the time or place to obtain it. Where are the fugitives? You have hidden them somewhere, and think to detain us here that they may have time to make good their escape."

"No, your grace, none are hidden here," said the Prince composedly. "We are here alone, and do not hide ourselves. We came here in order to take a last farewell of one another, and once more to exchange our vows of eternal love, ere, driven by inexorable fate, I take my leave of The Hague. I had meant to have kept my love, as the most precious treas-

ure of my life, silently locked in the depths of my heart, until the clouds which now lower over our house should be dissipated. Not the fugitive Charles Stuart, but the Prince of Wales reinstated in his rights, should sue for the hand of the Princess of Orange. A strange accident has willed it otherwise. Some one, gracious lady—and I suspect who—has revealed to you the secret of our rendezvous. You have come and surprised this young lady and myself in the sweetest solitude. Our love no longer submits to secrecy, and honor requires that we confess it to you. I do so proudly and joyfully, and entreat your grace to bestow upon us your motherly benediction."

Motionless and rigid as in a trance Louisa had stood and listened. She made not the slightest attempt to interrupt him; her whole soul was in her eyes, and her eyes were ever fixed there—*there* upon the muffled figure in the doorway.

Her mother's voice roused her from this state of stupefaction, this dreamlike reverie.

"Louisa," asked the Princess Amelia, "has your heart then yielded at last? Do you love, do you voluntarily resolve to marry?"

She made no reply. Her cheeks were pale as death, her lips quivered, but not a sound issued from them.

"If you disown my explanation and betray our brother and sister, you will have their deaths upon your skirts," whispered the Prince of Wales, bending over her.

"Daughter," asked the Princess Amelia softly, "why do you not answer me? Do you love the Prince of Wales?"

She shivered, her spirit recovered from its torpor, a rich glow suffused her cheeks, and her whole frame trembled.

"No!" she cried emphatically, "I do not love him!" And she impatiently tore her hand from his grasp and gave him a proud and withering glance.

"But, Louisa," said the mother, "why will you persist in denying your love, when the Prince confesses it, and makes the only apology which can in any degree justify your improper appearance here."

"He speaks falsely, it is a perfect tissue of falsehood and deceit!" she cried indignantly. "Oh, he knows that I did not

come here to see him, or to receive his childish protestations of love; he knows very well that I ventured not upon this course through levity, but that it was for the fulfillment of a sacred duty! Sir Prince of Wales, I adjure you to own the truth! Will you say upon your word of honor that I came here to meet *you*—to have an interview with *you?*"

"Ah, adored Louisa, you would seek to find excuses in cunning words," said he, smiling. "I can not indeed affirm upon my word of honor that we met first in this room, for we met outside the Chinese garden, where I was waiting for you."

"Is that true, Louisa?" asked her mother.

"Yes, it is true," cried she, "but——"

"Enough!" interrupted Princess Amelia. "To what purpose any further discussion, any further denial? You took a most improper, reprehensible step, Louisa, in coming here at this unseasonable hour to take leave of the Prince of Wales. Unhappily we have become the witnesses of your rendezvous, a singular concatenation of circumstances having led us hither. There is only one course now open to you, viz., to make the *amende honorable* by giving your hand to the Prince of Wales, and that as speedily as possible."

"Thanks, most gracious mother, thanks!" shouted the Prince of Wales, seizing the Princess Amelia's hand and covering it with kisses.

But Princess Louisa rushed forward and repelled him from her mother, with flashing eyes and manner expressive of highest emotion.

"You shall not carry this hypocritical game any further!" she said earnestly. "I shall put an end to this jugglery, I will speak the truth!"

"And kill your brother?" asked he, bending over her.

"Oh, what is all that to me now?" she cried, in noble indignation. "For my brother's sake I could die, but not bear dishonor. And dishonored would I be if I had come here to meet a lover. Dishonored would I be if I had secretly met the Prince of Wales here without my mother's knowledge. I would never have consented to such a thing, even if I had loved the Prince of Wales. But I do not love him—no, I have never, never loved him for a single moment!"

"And yet you have invited dishonor," said Princess Amelia harshly; "for we have surprised you in an interview with the Prince of Wales, and you must either consent to become his wife or explain to us how you chanced to be here without any design of meeting him?"

"That you can not explain," said Charles softly; "give it up, Louisa; attempt not to conceal what can not be concealed. It wounds your sense of maidenly delicacy to be reproached with having committed an impropriety, but love excuses all, and my wife will have no need to blush for her love."

"You shall not delude me with your specious words!" cried she angrily. "And you shall not think that I shrink from speaking the truth! Once more I say for my brother's sake I could die, but not bear dishonor! Mother, I can give you proof that I am not guilty of the misdemeanor with which you reproach me."

She drew from her pocket a little twisted paper and handed it to her mother.

"Read, Princess!" she said proudly—"read!"

"For God's sake!" cried the Prince of Wales, who only knew too well his sister Mary's note, and therefore sought to stay her hand—"for God's sake what are you about to do?"

"I would vindicate my honor," she said, and, disengaging her hand, she looked upon him with profound contempt. "Read, Princess Amelia! And you, too, Sir Elector, I shall thank to read this note from my sister-in-law. I know not why my mother brought you here, but since you are here, I should like to be justified before you also."

"No!" cried the Elector, impulsively throwing aside hat and cloak, and rushing up to Louisa—"no, I will read nothing, know nothing! You need no other justification than that seen in your sweet nature, your genuine indignation. I need not to read that letter, which doubtless lays bare a whole tissue of artifice and intrigue. At the first deprecatory word uttered by your chaste lips, deep in my inmost soul sank the conviction that you were guiltless of all fault. I shall not derogate from this proof by listening to any other that might be given me. O Louisa! if you only knew how lovely you were

to behold, in your noble wrath! My whole soul bows down before you in glad homage, joying to recognize in you the embodiment of youth, beauty, and loveliness, and, what is more than all these, of the perfect purity of maidenly innocence and truth."

He dropped on one knee before her, and, as he lifted up his clasped hands to her, his glances were expressive of the most glowing admiration, and his noble, manly countenance was irradiate with love, energy, and enthusiasm.

"Princess Louisa of Orange," he said, "will you graciously answer me one question in the presence of these witnesses? I offer you my hand and heart, promising to love, cherish, and honor you as the dearest boon vouchsafed me by Heaven! Princess Louisa of Orange, will you accept the hand which I offer you, will you be my wife?"

Ever he looked up at her with beaming eyes and radiant countenance. He saw nothing but *her*, hardly knew that any others were present, did not see that Princess Amelia had long since ceased to read and was gazing intently upon the handsome young couple. Neither did he see the Prince of Wales, standing there pale and almost breathless, supporting himself upon the marble table at his side. He saw nothing but her, and with palpitating heart awaited an answer from her lips.

And she? With deep emotion had she heard his words, the light of joy shining in her eyes, her cheeks crimsoning and paling with the rapid beat of her pulses. At his last question she trembled and involuntarily bent over his kneeling form, and, laying her right hand on his shoulder, looked with a wondrous smile into his animated, excited countenance. But gradually this smile, which had lighted up her features as with rays of parting sunshine, died away, and a painful melancholy clouded her face.

"Louisa!" cried the Elector anxiously—"Louisa, I beseech you to answer me. Will you accept my heart and love? Will you be my wife?"

She slowly shook her head, and a deep sigh escaped her bosom. "I thank you, Cousin Frederick," she said, drawing a long breath. "You are very good to me, very magnani-

mous. You would make for me the *amende honorable* which my mother pronounced to be necessary. Oh, you are a good, noble man, and so long as I live I shall cherish the memory of your present kindness. But I can not, nevertheless, accept your magnanimous offer."

"Louisa!" cried the Elector, "do you reject me, do you refuse my hand and heart?"

She thoughtfully nodded her head. "You offer me your hand," she said, "but not your heart. You have allowed yourself to be carried away by your feelings of compassion; seeing me in such extremity of distress, in your magnanimity you thought to offer the timid dove a shelter, and to shield her from harm on your strong heart. But know, sir, that I can not and will not take advantage of your generosity. While I thank you, then, cousin, for the honor you do me in thus offering me your hand, I can not—see what a foolish girl I am!—I can not profit by the rash offer which you make me, tempted by pity."

"Oh, you suppose this is a rash offer?" exclaimed the Elector, smiling. "You are too proud to accept a proposition which you take to be an impromptu of generosity? Most gracious aunt, I must summon you to the rescue. I must beg you to consider yourself released from your promise of secrecy, and to tell this young lady the object of my visit to The Hague."

"I will tell you, Louisa," said her mother, "and you know that my lips have never been polluted by an untruth. The Elector had asked your father's and my consent to propose for our daughter's hand, both by letter and verbally through his chancellor. In case of our favorable reply, he preferred the request that we should not inform you of his suit, but allow him to come and try in person to win your heart. We willingly accorded him his desire, and so our nephew has come to make his proposals in person."

"To try to win your heart," added the Elector. "Now that you know, Louisa, that I did not make my proposal through the hasty impulse of the moment, but that it has been a matter long considered, and that I was only waiting for a favorable moment to open my heart to you, will you reject

me? Once more I ask you, Princess Louisa of Orange, will you accept my hand and heart? Will you with me venture upon the difficult path of life? Will you become my wife in the conviction that I shall love you unceasingly, confide in you as my best friend, and cherish you as my most precious possession. Will you accept my hand?"

"Yes!" she cried, in a tone of exultant joy. "Yes, I will!" And her head bent so low that her fair curls almost touched his brow.

The Elector sprang to his feet and encircled the Princess in his arms. A suppressed shriek was heard, a shriek of mingled rage and grief, and, heeded by no one, detained by no one, the Prince of Wales darted through the hall, tore open the door, and rushed into the open air.

"You consent then?" asked Frederick William, releasing the Princess from his arms to look upon her and meet her smile. "You will try to love me a little and be content with my love?"

She looked into his eyes, and a blissful smile illumined her features. "I must make a confession to you and my mother, and I care not if my dear uncle hears me, too. All fear and timidity seem to have left me, and I feel as if the whole world might be admitted to hear what I have to say. Mother, do you remember the promise you made me when I fell ill of distress at the prospect of being married to the Elector of Hesse? You promised me never to force me to marry against my will, do you recollect it, mother?"

"Yes, indeed, well do I recollect it," smiled the Princess, "and often enough have I repented of having made this promise, in the foolish weakness of my mother's heart."

"But I will now tell you, mamma, why I besought you so to do: not because I wished to find a person whom I could love, but because ever since my childhood my heart, my affections, my dreams had centered upon *one* whom I knew that I would love as long as I lived, and that no other love could extinguish this sentiment of my soul. And this one, whom I have always loved, whom I shall ever love, my first, my last, my only love, is my dear cousin, Elector Frederick William. Had he not chosen me, I should have remained single; but

since I am his choice, I accept him with joy and gratitude, only praying that God may give me strength to make him as happy as he deserves to be. There, I give myself to you, Elector, for I am yours already in heart and soul."

"I take you and give myself to you, sweetest Louisa. Blessings upon you for the glorious words which your dear lips have just uttered. Let me imprint a betrothal kiss upon those lips, and accept therewith my vows of eternal constancy and love, my own fair bride."

He clasped her in his arms and gave her a long and ardent kiss.

"And I seem entirely out of the question," said Princess Amelia, approaching the happy couple. "You do not ask whether I give my consent, and the whole world seems to be banished from your minds."

"Your grace had already given me your consent, on condition that I could gain this proud, cold heart!" cried the Elector.

"And I do not retract it," returned the Princess, smiling. "Only I must beg you both to descend a little from the heavenly heights to which you have soared, and to revisit the earth and occupy yourselves with sublunary affairs. We shall have many days, I trust, wherein to rejoice over your happiness and union. But now we must turn our thoughts upon other matters. The letter which Louisa just gave me certainly justifies her appearance here, but explains nothing else, and I must therefore beg of you, Louisa, to give me some further explanations."

"Which, alas! I am unable to give, most gracious mamma. I know nothing but what is in that letter. Mary therein summoned me to come here and take a last farewell of her before she left us with her husband forever. I came hither, because I hoped to persuade the foolish young lovers to give up their scheme, and, for our sick father's sake, to remain here quietly and peaceably. On my way I met the Prince of Wales, and learned from him that he had likewise received a note from his sister directing him to come to the Chinese Pavilion. So we proceeded in company, but waited in the parlor in vain, for nobody came."

"And was the Prince of Wales equally ignorant of the flight of the young couple?" asked the Elector, smiling.

"He seemed just as much astonished and to know just as little about it as I myself."

"That is to say, he has a great talent for acting," said Frederick William, shrugging his shoulders. "Permit me to throw a little light upon the matter, for I happen to know that the Prince of Wales was the *deus ex machina* throughout. I have proof of it. This afternoon, being in a restless and melancholy mood, I wandered about the park aimlessly and hopelessly, seeking the most unfrequented paths. Suddenly I became conscious that I had struck into the road leading to Bosch, and was now just opposite the castle. A carriage stood near at hand, into which two persons mounted, whom I could not distinguish in the gathering twilight, but a voice called out to the coachman, 'Gallop off, coachman, to Amsterdam!' It was the voice of the Prince of Wales which pronounced those words; the carriage rolled off and I turned around to repair to the Chinese Pavilion. For what purpose, Louisa, I shall tell you another time. But you see that if the Prince of Wales pretended to be ignorant of the flight of his sister and her husband, it was sheer dissimulation."

"Yes, that is beyond doubt," exclaimed Princess Amelia. "It was they. They have gone to Amsterdam, to appear there in public as a wedded pair, and thus force us to recognize their union. It was a well-devised trick and we will most probably be brought to terms. We must investigate all these things more closely; now it is high time to return home, for my husband may ask for us and be surprised at our nonappearance. Come then, young people, but be discreet in your manners, that our servants may not learn of your betrothal until the father has given his consent and blessing. Sir Elector, give me your arm, and you, Louisa, follow us with your good uncle."

They left the pavilion and stepped out into the garden. The torchbearers still stood on both sides of the portal, and the broad glare from their lights illuminated with daylight splendor the countenances of both pairs. As they silently

and rapidly moved forward a dark shadow glided forth from the rear of the pavilion, hastened after them and approached the Elector, who was engaged in most earnest low-toned conversation with Princess Amelia.

"Sir Elector, may I ask for one word with you?"

The Elector, bowing, requested the Princess's permission to leave her for a moment, as some one wished to speak with him.

"It is Charles Stuart," whispered the Princess. "Go to him, and please be gentle with him. Remember that he is but a child, and unhappy. Go, we will proceed slowly."

The Elector bowed again and stood still until the three had passed him.

"Here I am, Sir Prince of Wales," he said, after the others had gone too far to be able to hear anything of their discourse. "You have something to say to me, and I am at your service."

"Yes, I have something to say to you," murmured the Prince, in a low, melancholy voice, seeming to speak with difficulty. "You have conquered, Sir Elector, you have crushed all my hopes, and left me nothing to look forward to but a joyless future. I have good reason to hate you, and perhaps I do, but it will in no way alleviate my own misfortunes if I should slay you to-morrow in mortal conflict. It would do me no earthly good, for, instead of gaining me Louisa's love, it would insure her hatred if I should imbrue my hand in her lover's blood."

"And therefore," said the Elector softly—"and therefore you would not lift your weapon against me? Prince Charles of Wales, permit *me* now to speak a few words. It was I who this morning challenged you. I now beg you to accept my apology."

"Will you not esteem me a coward if I do?" asked the Prince. "Ah, believe me, sir, at this moment life has but few charms for me. I have not only this day made shipwreck of all my hopes and wishes, but I feel that I have disgraced myself. Ah, I feel that you were right in saying that I am still but a child, for I admit that I acted like a child in playing the part of a man and seeking to win a woman's love! Say

that you will not regard me as a coward if I give up this duel?"

"My Prince," replied Frederick William gravely, "the history of your house is known of all men, and no one has ever attributed cowardliness to the character of the noble Stuart. Especially but a slight acquaintance with yourself is needed to impress one with the conviction that in your breast beats a manly heart."

"You are magnanimous to a fallen foe," said the Prince bitterly. "To the child of to-day you grant a manly heart. I thank you, sir, and hope to prove some day that a brave heart does beat in my breast. Believe me, the future looks dark before me, and far preferable to my feelings seems the sudden death inflicted by a thrust from your sword to the slow death inflicted by the hundred little wounds and needle-pricks of fate. But I may not die now. Life is for me a duty. To this consciousness have the sad events of to-night roused me. I must live for my family, for the honor of my house! I must wander as a suppliant from court to court, entreating help and succor for my father and my kingdom! To-morrow, early, I shall set out with my mother and sisters for France, and who knows whether I shall ever return or ever again behold my native land? The Stuarts are not a fortunate race, and misfortune seems the only friend who has never proved untrue to them. Farewell, Sir Elector, you have conquered me! May *she* be happy and tell her—— Ah, I long once more to press her hand and bid her a last good-by!"

"Do so, your highness," said the Elector. "Be pleased to accompany me and join the ladies, who are now in the avenue. We will soon overtake them, and, if you say so, I will desire the Princess to receive your farewells while we go forward in advance."

"You do not even honor me by being jealous, and would yourself procure me an interview with the Princess," sighed the Prince. "My heart, though, is so humbled that it must silently submit to all. Come then, Sir Elector, let us follow the ladies."

They moved swiftly forward, neither of them uttering

a word—the Elector was silent through delicacy, the Prince of Wales through gnawing grief.

When they had caught up with the ladies the Elector quickened his pace, and the Prince of Wales halted. The red glare of the torches lighted his face, and as it was thus exposed to the view of the Princesses, who turned around, it seemed to them as if he had suddenly grown many years older, as if they looked upon the careworn countenance of a full-grown man.

"I will go to him, I will take leave of him," whispered Louisa. "All stay here and wait for me."

She turned quickly around and went to meet the Prince, who slowly approached her.

"My dear cousin," she said kindly, "you have called me, and here I am. If you should ever hereafter need to call upon me for a proof of friendship or cousinly love, be assured I shall joyfully hasten to respond to your call. I hope you know and will never forget that I love you sincerely, as only a sister can love a brother."

"Balsam for wounds," he murmured softly. "Thank you, Louisa, for all your goodness and forbearance, thank you for all the exquisite delight you have given me, and also for the pangs of this hour. They will steel me and ripen me into manhood, and if I now courageously battle with adversity, the thought of you will be the secret source whence I shall draw inspiration and strength. I have much to atone for, but I will do it. To that end, Louisa, give me your blessing. I have sorely sinned against you; pardon the repentant wretch, who now kneels with a broken, contrite heart and implores your forgiveness."

He fell upon his knees before the Princess, and seizing her hand, pressed it to his lips and covered it with his kisses and his tears.

"Prince Charles," whispered Louisa softly, "I can not say but that I have felt aggrieved by your conduct toward me, but it becomes poor, erring mortals to be gentle and forbearing toward one another. Freely, then, I forgive you all your offenses against me, in consideration of your misfortunes. Do not despond, dear cousin, but hope for better and happier

days. Be up, be strong, reflect that the eye of the world and of posterity is upon you. Bear your cross bravely, and, believe me, it will be some day transformed into a crown."

"Maybe so, cousin," sighed the Prince of Wales, slowly rising from his knees, "but God alone knows whether this crown will be of gold or thorns. Be it as it may, I must devote my life to struggling for its attainment. You shall hear of me, Louisa, and if they tell you that Charles Stuart has fallen in defense of his father and his throne, then know that the last word whispered by his dying lips was your name."

"Oh, my dear cousin, you will not die; you are still so young and have so much to live for. Surely God in his mercy will reseat your father upon his throne, and restore to him the love of his people."

"May your words prove true, cousin. Let us part now, since part we must. Farewell, Louisa, bright star of my youth, farewell! Be happy, and when so think kindly of poor Charles Stuart, who, like the wandering Jew, will be traversing the globe, seeking rest and finding none. Go, Louisa, go where light and love await you, go and leave me behind to night and darkness!"

"Farewell, Cousin Charles, and may God grant you peace and joy!"

As she gently whispered these words, she turned and withdrew; the red torchlight revealed her slender, graceful form, and he felt bitterly that he had lost her forever. Long he gazed after her, until the whole party had vanished from sight, then with a deep sigh he quickly took the path leading to Bosch, where he knew his mother was expecting him.

Early next morning a little sailing vessel put to sea from the coast of Scheveningen, steering for France. With all sails hoisted, lightly and proudly she danced over the waters. From the top mast side by side floated the Dutch and English flags, for on board that ship were the Queen of England, her family, and the Prince of Wales, who now with heart-sickness was just setting forth on his pilgrimage in search of his lost country and throne.

IX.—The Wedding.

The same morning two traveling equipages drove off from the Stadtholder's court at The Hague, taking the road for Amsterdam; within sat Princess Amelia, her daughter, the Elector Frederick William, and a few lords and ladies of the court.

Princess Louisa had begged of her mother as a wedding present to be allowed to accompany that Princess and act as mediator between her and the beloved fugitives, and the Elector had obtained permission from both ladies to act as their escort.

They repaired, therefore, to Amsterdam, and in the palace there took place the first meeting between Princess Amelia and the young married pair. Prince William, his wife hanging upon his arm, stepped up to his mother with humble mien, and with the devotion of a son besought her forgiveness for his disobedience, which naught but his love could excuse.

"And you, daughter?" asked Princess Amelia, fixing her large imperious eyes upon the beautiful and peculiarly feminine face of Mary, who ventured to meet her mother-in-law's fierce looks with smiling tranquillity, "have you no word of repentance to speak?"

"No, most gracious mother," boldly replied the Princess. "I find no utterance for penitent speeches, because, to tell your grace the truth, I do not repent of what we have done! We had been married for four years, and the Bible says that man and wife should leave father and mother to live together. So we have only done what all married people are commanded by Scripture to do."

Princess Amelia gave her a look of indignant astonishment. It was the first time that any one had dared to oppose her so boldly, and to defy her anger with quiet equanimity. She was already in the act of making a passionate reply, when the Elector softly laid his hand upon her shoulder, and Louisa approached with pleading looks.

"Gracious aunt," said Frederick William, "you see that these young people are minded to lead pious, godly lives, regu-

THE PALACE AT THE HAGUE.

From an engraving by J. C. Varrall.

lating themselves by the precepts of the Bible. Now, a leading command of the sacred Scriptures says, 'Honor thy father and thy mother.' I am sure, therefore, that these dear fugitives will make it their most hallowed task to live in obedience to this law."

"Certainly, oh, certainly we will!" cried Prince William. He drew his gently resisting young wife up to his mother, and, kneeling before her, almost compelled Mary to assume the same attitude before her proud mother-in-law, since he held her hand firmly in his own.

"Forgiveness, gracious mother!" cried the Prince, in tender tones. "Pardon our love, and be assured you will ever find in us most reverential, obedient, and submissive children."

"Be kind, my dear mother," whispered Princess Louisa, pressing her mother's hands to her lips. "You have given me a bridal gift in allowing me to accompany you here; but one pearl is still lacking to make my gift perfect. Be pleased now to grant me the pearl of forgiveness for my dear brother and sister."

"Well, be it so," said Princess Amelia with a smile, which, however, was a little forced. "I *will* forgive; I will believe in your obedience and filial love. Arise, come to my arms, and be heartily welcome, you bad runaways!"

She tenderly drew to her heart the young couple, who had promptly arisen, and, as she imprinted a kiss on Princess Mary's broad, open brow, she said smilingly, "Princess William of Orange, your apartments in the Stadtholder's court at The Hague are ready for you, and if you choose you can this evening upon our return take possession of them." *

* Princess Mary of England, however, did not long enjoy the happiness of her youthful marriage. A few months after their union Prince Frederick Henry died, and his son William was declared Stadtholder by the States-General of Holland. Princess Mary was therefore the wife of the reigning Prince, and was not at all ill disposed to rule a little herself and take her revenge upon her mother-in-law, who had hitherto been undisputed mistress in her husband's court. But Princess Amelia proved the stronger of the two, and soon contrived to wrest the scepter from the weak hands of her daughter-in-law, and subject her to herself.

Happy weeks of blissful companionship now followed for the young betrothed, the Elector Frederick William and the Princess Louisa Henrietta. The very next day after his betrothal the Elector appeared at the session of the States-General, in order to pay his respects to the puissant lords there assembled, and to make to them in person the announcement of his engagement to the Princess of Orange, also to propose to them to enter into a firm and abiding league with himself, and to aid him in repelling the Swedes in their unjust and unwarrantable efforts to wrest from him his Pomeranian possessions.

The States-General found a peculiar delight in contemplating the noble young Prince, who came into their midst in such an open, high-spirited manner to lay before them his plans and wishes; and at that very session two important things were determined. In the first place, the States declared their joyful acquiescence in the alliance of the Princess of Orange with the Elector of Brandenburg, and unanimously voted the Princess an annual pension of twenty thousand guilders.

The marriage with the Princess Louisa Henrietta, which in the beginning had been only a question of policy, had now become to the Elector an affair of the heart, and old Burgsdorf saw with amazement, and not without a bitter feeling of jealousy, the great alteration which this engagement with the Princess of Orange had wrought in his master's nature. Frederick William was cheerful and placid, his handsome face was radiant with animation, and in his eyes, when he fixed them upon the Princess, shone such a beam of love and joy that all must see how heartily he was devoted to his betrothed.

"If it goes on so," growled the high chamberlain to himself, "the Elector, whom I hoped to see such a renowned warrior, will be nothing but a hero of the slipper, and my

Prince William died, after a short, happy marriage, in 1650, even before the birth of his first child, afterward William III. of Orange. Princess Amelia managed to be appointed guardian to her grandson, casting aside entirely her daughter-in-law's claim to the regency. Princess Mary led a melancholy, dependent life under her mother-in-law's regency, and died in the year 1660.

lady will be for chasing us all out of the palace with that slipper. But I will not suffer it!" he cried aloud; "no, the fair lady shall not turn my Elector's heart from me, and it shall never be said that old Conrad von Burgsdorf has been unhorsed by a woman. I shall keep a sharp eye upon her, and if there is not a speedy end to this love-making after marriage, old Burgsdorf will lay his countermines and try to blow up this fine card house of love! He is a sly old fellow, and my lady will find him a match for her. Look out, Princess Louisa of Orange; see that you do not cross my path, or you shall learn what it is to have a contest with an old iron-eater like myself!"

Princess Louisa suspected nothing of this jealous rage on the part of the high chamberlain. She had for him as for every one else a gracious nod, a winning smile. She saw the whole world through a rose-colored medium of hope and love, and it seemed to her as if she ought to ask pardon from every mourner, from every afflicted person, because she felt so very happy, because, when her eyes now filled with tears, they were tears of delight and grateful sensibility.

The Elector, too, was happy and contented, and yet there was one thing which cast a shadow upon his cheerfulness. He had no money, and only a few days after his engagement Burgsdorf had come with melancholy mien to announce to him, that after all the expenses of their brilliant *entrée* had been met, the traveling purse was entirely empty and urgently called for replenishing.

"Wisely spoken, old man," said Frederick William; "this conclusion does honor to your head. Only be pleased to inform me in what manner this replenishing may be effected."

"I have already held a consultation on the subject with von Schwerin and von Seidel," returned Burgsdorf, sighing, "for no time is to be lost."

"And the result of your deliberations?"

"Rather unsatisfactory, your highness. The treasury, as you know, is empty, and such heavy taxes have been already imposed upon the people that any increase would be impossible. The last resource seems to be that your highness should once more turn to Prussia and apply to that duchy for money.

Herr von Schwerin has already drawn up a petition to the Sovereign States for the grant of fifty thousand dollars. I have the paper here, and, if your grace requires it, can lay it before you for your signature."

"How prompt you all are when the question is about money matters," said Frederick William smilingly, after he had read the paper; "but when people ask for money they should not speak so independently and peremptorily. It would be better to adopt a little more finesse and softness of style."

"But your grace is the master, and the counselors your officials and servants."

"My officials, yes—my servants, no! If the servant has the power to give or withhold money from his lord, does it not prove him the master of his master? The unhappy state of things in Prussia empowers the States to control their monetary affairs, which is a sad drag upon me, for these lords are conceited, stupid folk, who thrust their noses into everything and fancy that no one is so wise as themselves. All this must be altered in time. But now it behooves us to take things as they are, and coax where we can not command. Hand me the paper. I will sign it, and add a little *nota bene*."

The Elector took the pen, and, after signing his name with dashing flourishes, appended this postscript: "You will confer a great favor by using your utmost diligence that the money be promptly forthcoming, and be remitted in bills of exchange upon Amsterdam. Such attention will be most graciously acknowledged." *

"God grant that the councillors may obey orders," sighed the high chancellor. "We certainly have most pressing need for money, for I am constrained to admit to your highness that the mynheers here in Holland are very sly foxes, and things are not going on so swimmingly as I had hoped. I went yesterday to Amsterdam to purchase the lace, velvet, and satin for your grace's wedding clothes, as well as the needed pearls and precious stones. But—could you have believed it possible?—these tradesmen all expressed themselves as joyfully ready to fill the orders, and swore that they

* See von Orlich, History of Prussia, vol. i, p. 534.

would furnish everything of the finest and best. But they made one shameless condition: they would only deliver their goods for cash!"

"Shameless the condition is!" cried the Elector, laughing, "but not silly, for it is very possible that we might have asked for a long credit. Let us hope, then, that the States of Prussia will this time listen to reason, and soon transmit to us the longed-for bills of exchange." And this hope must have been fulfilled, for in due time the jewelers, silk merchants, and tailors delivered their wares, and on the 7th of December, 1646, were solemnized the nuptials of the young Electoral pair.

A quiet wedding it was, for the sickness of Prince Frederick Henry, the bride's father, had grown worse, and his death was thought to be imminent—a quiet wedding, for Louisa Henrietta loved not noisy parade, and her noble, thoughtful spirit needed no outward splendor to throw sunlight upon her love and happiness. She had sunlight within, and her smiling lips and sweet silence spoke more eloquently of inward bliss than the loudest merriment could have done. But if it were only a quiet wedding yet it was stately and magnificent enough, and the young Elector could not forego the opportunity of displaying to the mynheers his princely dignity in all its pomp. His coat was of white satin, but little of the material was to be seen, so thickly was it set with pearls and sparkling gems, so magnificently was it embroidered with gold, all the seams even being trimmed with gold lace. The knee breeches, too, were of white satin, richly embroidered with gold, set off at the knee and side seams with diamonds and lace. He wore white silk stockings, and on the red-heeled shoes glittered two buckles set with sparkling diamonds.

Not less luxurious was the bride's toilet. Her dress was of silver brocade quite covered with Brussels point lace of the most delicate texture, ingeniously strewed with pearls and diamonds. Behind her nestled a gold-embroidered satin train eight yards long, borne by eight young countesses. On her head she wore a crown, studded with pearls and diamonds. A veil of the finest gold tissue fell down from the crown and enveloped her whole figure. They were a glorious

couple. Love, youth, beauty, and health beamed from their countenances, and all who looked on them rejoiced, but most of all rejoiced the pair themselves.

When the Elector stood before the altar, hand in hand with his bride, and when both had joyfully and distinctly pronounced the binding "yes," then with beaming eyes looked Frederick William upon his bride, and exclaimed to himself: "Blessed be this hour, which gives to my heart a wife, to my people a noble Sovereign! Oh, may she and I succeed in making my people happy, my country great and prosperous!"

BOOK III.

I.—The Return from Prague.

To-day all Berlin was in a state of joyful excitement and uproar, everywhere the houses were gayly decorated, and the streets, which had been scrupulously cleansed and swept, were full of men, and these men streaming from all quarters in the direction of the castle square and the pleasure garden.

Many, indeed, had merely allowed themselves to be dragged along by the current, and followed the others without knowing what was going on; and now, seeing that all made a halt on the castle square, they gazed curiously up at the castle, as if expecting thence an explanation of this unwonted stir. But the castle frowned down in imperturbable silence, and the masons and carpenters, who had been at work some weeks adding wings to the old building, quietly pursued their labors, not at all affected by the bustle around them, or perhaps animated to increased efforts to put the finishing strokes to a balcony upon which they were at work.

"And yet something is to pay," said shoemaker Wendt to tailor Fürberg, who stood beside him. "I stick to it that something is to pay. Only see, the journeymen masons are dressed up just as fine as if it were Sunday, and the master builder Memmhart, who is just speaking with them, has arrayed himself in such gorgeous attire that you would fancy him to be some nobleman—a baron or a count perhaps."

"As if that were anything strange," said the tailor, shrugging his shoulders. "Bless you, there are plenty of barons and counts that would be glad enough to change places with the master builder Memmhart; for, you see, he has work and

an office that furnishes him an ample support, while the noblemen, impoverished by the long war, have no means of restoring their ruined estates or rebuilding their burned mansions. They therefore drag out a miserable existence, for they know no way of helping themselves, and have no money to pay for the services of others."

"Wist you, master, that you are holding seditious discourse?" asked the shoemaker, shocked. "Did anybody ever hear of such a thing? You speak of barons and counts as if they were our equals, and not exalted lords standing upright, while we must bow to the earth; whose it is to command, while we have nothing to do but to obey."

"Must," cried the obstinate tailor, "we do so because we are base, cowardly fellows, ignorant of our own consequence. Nobody talks any more of 'must,' though. The commons are just as good as the nobles, and the tradesman has his rights as well as the prince. That comes from our having a constitution, master; just laws, ratified by the Elector, which everybody must observe. Now, it is written in the constitution in black and white that nothing can be done without the consent of the cities and States. And, you see, the States consist of the nobility, but the cities are *we*—we, shoemakers, tailors, locksmiths—in short, all the tradesmen and burghers who compose a city, and our magistrates are nothing more than our representatives, and, if you choose, our mouths, by means of which we give our opinions and our votes. And if our votes oppose the wishes of the States, they can not be accomplished, and therefore I have reason to say that we burghers and tradesmen are just as good as the noblemen and squires."

"Say so, if you please, master," retorted the shoemaker, shrugging his shoulders, "but nobody believes you. Meanwhile, all this has brought us no nearer learning what is on hand here, and why the streets are all swept, and why—— Just look, master, there come all the magistrates along the high road. See, they are dressed in their black robes, and are marching direct to the castle."

"Bless me, it is true! There they come!" cried the tailor. "Hark ye, master, I will burst with curiosity if I do

not find out the meaning of all this. Good luck! suppose the Electress has given us a son at last, and——"

"Nonsense," returned the other, smiling. "There has been no mention of anything of the kind in the prayers of the Church or anywhere else. Since the little Electoral Prince died, three years ago, when he was hardly six months old, there seems to have been no hope of the kind, and yet it would be dreadful if the Elector should die without heirs, for—— But see, master, there is old Claus, the beggar, let us find out from him the cause of this gathering."

"Yes, indeed, master, that we will. Let's ask old Claus. He hears the very grass grow, and must of course know what is going on here."

The two citizens forced their way through the ever-thickening throng, and approached the beggar, who had just stationed himself, not far from the two men, near the portal leading into the castle.

"Well, old Claus!" cried tailor Fürberg, greeting with a friendly nod a pale, haggard man in a long gray gown, "just tell me why you have come here, and why we are all here."

"I came as I come every day," replied Claus quietly. "You know I have my stand here, and no beadle or rascal has a right to force me away, nor consequently you either."

"What!" exclaimed the tailor, piqued. "Am I a rascal?"

"Yes, and a pretty bad one," replied the beggar Claus. "You carry wicked, seditious thoughts in your thick skull and talk about matters that you know as little of as that ox of the new balcony, which the masons there are building."

"You are right, old Claus!" cried the shoemaker, laughing; "it is just as you say with Master Fürberg."

"And you are all just so," said the beggar earnestly, while his large hollow eyes swept over the multitude that stood there packed together, some jesting and cheering, others snarling and gruff. "You are all alike—curious but stupid, lazy but captious."

"Hush, old Claus!" cried the tailor; "hold your slanderous tongue, or, I tell you, it will go hard with you, and you shall at last be brought to account for your sorcery and deal-

ings with the devil, for we all know that you have to do with witchcraft."

"Yes, yes, that is true," screamed a couple of voices in the crowd, which closed around them. "Yes, Claus is a queer sort of a beggar. The devil is in it—he is a wizard."

"He is a star-gazer!" shouted Ewald, the cobbler. "Yesterday evening, as I was going across the castle square, there stood Claus on a stone near the cathedral. He did not take any notice of me, but kept his eyes fixed on the sky and the stars; his arms were stretched out, and I heard him talk aloud, although not a creature was by. I thought I would just find out what he was about, and so crept up closer. Only think, as I live, he was talking to the stars, and carrying on for all the world just like the fellow in the puppet play, and holding a most loverlike conversation with a woman with large black eyes, yet withal invisible; and once he called upon her name as tenderly as if he had been a turtle dove and it was——"

"Hush or I will choke you!" shrieked the beggar, springing upon the narrator, and furiously grasping him round the neck. "Dare not pronounce *her* name, you mean, contemptible eavesdropper!"

"I will, though!" screamed the other, striving to free himself from the beggar's clutch. "He told his sweetheart's name, and it was the same as Father Isaac's wife, Rebec——"

"It is your own fault!" cried the beggar, as with one blow he sent the burgher reeling, causing the blood to gush from nose and mouth.

One yell of fury from the mob, and the wildest hubbub ensued. Everybody pressed to the front, everybody longed to administer a cuff to the beggar who had dared to insult a burgher. A hundred clinched fists were raised, ready to inflict vengeance, to crush the miscreant.

But where was he? What had become of him and the stricken burgher?

There, in the midst of this knot of men, on the steps of the marble staircase leading up to the Electoral mansion, stood the two. The poor beaten man sat half fainting on the lowest step, with closed eyes, resting his head against one of the stone pillars supporting the iron railings. His whole

face was swollen, and the blood still poured from his nose. Before him knelt the beggar, with countenance pale as death and tears in his eyes. "Forgive me, master, please forgive me," he pleaded, with folded hands. "The evil spirit came upon me, once more the devil had power over me."

"He is a wizard! a sorcerer!"

"Only see, men!" shouted one, forcing his way through the crowd, "he has given Master Ewald such a cruel blow that he will die of it! The old sorcerer has dealt him such a blow on the face that a blood vessel must surely have burst, for, only see, the blood pours forth in streams!"

"Give me a cloth, somebody!" called out the beggar piteously. "Good heavens! don't stand there staring, but help me to stanch the blood! Give me a handkerchief!"

"It will do no good!" screeched old Kurt, the leech, who had thrust himself into the group, and was intently examining the half-unconscious cobbler. "He is doomed to death, and Claus only wants the handkerchief to conjure with and sell poor Ewald's soul to the devil. He says himself that he is in league with the devil, and so he must every now and then deliver up a soul to his master, to gain a longer respite for his own. He picked out Ewald because he is a wizard, and knows that Ewald is a bleeder, and therefore easier to kill than anybody else."

"A bleeder!" cried tailor Fürberg, quite astounded. "Listen, men, the cobbler Ewald is a bleeder!"

"What is that?" shouted the populace. "What is a bleeder? Tell us what that means?"

"Yes, Kurt, tell us what that means!" said the tailor impatiently. "What is a bleeder?"

Kurt promptly mounted the steps and stationed himself beside the swooning and still bleeding cobbler, about whom nobody gave himself any further trouble save Claus.

"What is a bleeder?" screamed the multitude. "Just be quiet!" screamed others, "that we may hear what the leech says!"

"Oh, the hard-hearted crew!" muttered Claus to himself. "Nobody has charity enough even to hand me a handkerchief!"

He gazed anxiously upon the cobbler, and, seeing the blood still flowed unceasingly, with an extreme effort of strength tore a strip off his own long gray gown and pressed it to the nose of the swooning man.

"A bleeder!" shouted Kurt, the leech—"a bleeder is a man whose blood flows so freely, even from a pin scratch, that nothing in the world can save the poor creature from bleeding to death. There are whole families in which this disease is hereditary, just like consumption. Now, Ewald is a bleeder, so he must needs die of the blow given him by beggar Claus."

"Ewald must die!" howled the mob. "Old Claus is his murderer! Ewald is a bleeder, and Claus has given him such a cruel blow that he must die!"

And with howls and yells the throng pressed closer, threatening the beggar with furious gestures, uplifted fists, and opprobrious epithets.

But he did not heed these demonstrations. His whole attention was absorbed by his poor prostrate foe, who lay there with dim, half-open eyes, deadly pale, the stream of blood ever gushing from his nose.

"He is right," murmured Claus to himself; "my unlucky blow must have burst a blood vessel, or he is a veritable bleeder and will die, and I will be his murderer, and—— No, no!" he broke forth, interrupting himself, "it shall not be! I *will* not have a new weight of guilt upon my soul! He must get well! Yes, he must get well!"

He continued, lifting up his eyes to heaven: "Oh, forgive me, my saint. For *thy* sake I punished the mocker; *thou* must save him!"

He quickly put his hand to his breast, under his gown, and when he withdrew this it held a little shining object.

"Just look at Claus!" screamed Kurt, the leech, who by a commanding movement of the hand sought to arrest the progress of the pushing mob, and with various signs and comical gestures gave the people to understand that they must watch the beggar, and that something unheard of was about to happen.

The mob actually allowed itself to be controlled by these

signs. The men ceased their outcries, and with outstretched necks and staring eyes gazed across at the group on the castle stairs, making mute signs to one another to keep still and watch Claus. The beggar heeded nought of all this, saw not with what burning curiosity the crowd gazed upon the little golden box, artistically wrought of Venetian filigree work, which Claus held in his hand, softly whispering a few words to himself as he opened it and drew forth a tiny flask. A few drops from this bottle he poured in the palm of his hand and rubbed with them the patient's temples. Then he tore another strip from his gown, moistened it with the contents of the little flask, and then applied it to the cobbler's nose and mouth.

"Help him, my saint!" he ejaculated, hastily restoring the bottle to its golden receptacle, and again concealing it upon his breast. "Help him, and save me from this crime!"

At this moment the cobbler opened his eyes, cast a bewildered look around, and made a movement as if to rise; but Claus forced him down again with both hands, and once more pressed the moistened rag firmly upon his nose and mouth.

The spectators saw with amazement that this rag was not covered with blood like the first, and from the front ranks a murmur ran through the whole multitude, one repeating to the other: "Yes, Claus is a wizard. He is in league with the devil. The cobbler is a bleeder, and yet Claus stopped the flow of blood by means of his devilish arts. Yes, yes, he has sold himself to the devil."

And the majority shrank back horror-stricken, while a few, emboldened by curiosity, pressed forward, railing at the sorcerer. Kurt, the leech, ever sought to intensify this rage. "Did you ever hear, friends," he squeaked in his cracked voice, "of a beggar living upon the charities of others and carrying golden trinkets under his rags? And is it not unheard of that such a sorry, ignorant beggar should spoil my trade, and in my very presence dare first to open veins and then to stop the flow of blood by his wicked art? I tell you beware of the sorcerer. Let us arraign him before the

priests and magistrates, for he is a wizard and will bring misfortune upon our town."

"Yes, we will bring him to account!" shouted the mob. "We are already miserable and poor enough, and the sorcerer shall not plunge us still deeper into misfortune!"

Claus replied to these howls only by a shrug of the shoulders and a glance of contempt, and then, with perfect composure, turned to the cobbler.

"Go home, poor man," he said, "drink a few draughts of cool spring water, sleep a couple of hours, and all will be right. But first I humbly beg your forgiveness for my misdeed. I certainly did not mean to injure you. I hardly knew what I did, for you had violated my most sacred feelings, and, without meaning it perhaps, scoffed at my grief. Forgive me, Ewald, please forgive me."

But the cobbler rudely repulsed the hand which Claus imploringly stretched out to him. "I will remember you, old wizard, for the blow you gave me to-day," he said, as he allowed the leech to help him to rise. "The day may come when I can pay it back with interest, and be assured that I shall manage to be quits with you."

"Yes, for we must not stay in the devil's debt!" screeched old Kurt, as the cobbler with difficulty made his way through the throng, endeavoring to creep to his home. "Hark, dear people, we must not stay in the devil's debt, and you all owe him something!"

"What do we owe the devil, Master Kurt!" was shouted from all sides.

"To cast him out of this place!" shrieked the leech, pointing to the beggar, who had resumed his accustomed seat, on the stone step, with head sunk upon his breast.

"Yes," shouted and laughed the multitude—"yes, we will cast the devil out. Away with you, old Claus, away! We will not suffer sorcerers and wizards among us! You shall not practice your infernal arts among us! Away with you, wizard! We will cast out the devil!"

With piercing yells and outcries the mass pressed forward toward the beggar, who had retreated to the top step of the flight leading to the castle portal. There he stood, erect, pale

as death, supporting his head against the gray wall, and looking with the composure of a bystander upon the surging mass which encircled him in wild confusion, upon the many clinched fists lifted threateningly against him.

"Am I to be released at last?" he asked softly. "Is this the hour of my deliverance? Will you call me to your side, Rebecca?"

A blow struck his shoulder, causing him to fall forward down the steps, into the heart of the throng that now presented the appearance of an impenetrable wall.

Now they had him, that raging mob, and with loud, mocking laughter and wild shrieks they fell upon him and cried: "Cast the devil out of him! Beat him until the devil leaves him! Tear from him the charm he carries on his breast! The devil is hid in that golden box! Out with it! Give it here!"

"No!" cried Claus, with failing voice, "you shall not have my treasure! Kill me, but while I live you shall——"

"Make room! Clear the way there!" was suddenly cried by loud, commanding voices, and above the heads of the raging populace were seen the halberds of the Elector's guardsmen.

"Clear the way there!" they repeated, forcing their rearing horses among the confused mob, which moved aside, curious to see what new object of interest was now to appear. Only one person had not fled, but was left behind in the midst of the open space which had been cleared before the castle portal—a poor bruised, bleeding creature, with tattered garments and dishevelled hair. There he lay cowering and moaning on the stone pavement, both hands still tightly clasped over his breast, and still murmuring: "They have not got my treasure yet. My life I would freely give them, but not that—no, never, never!"

"Away there!" some one called out imperiously, close beside him—"away with you, old Claus! Be off with you! Do you not see that the Elector is coming! Quick, move off in short order!"

The beggar tried to rise and make room for the exalted lord who was now approaching with his retinue. But his feet

refused to render their service, and with a low wail he sank back again.

Ever louder, ever more threatening became the cry: "Clear the way! Away with the beggar Claus!"

"I can not," he lamented aloud. "Oh, my God, I can not! Be compassionate! Drag me away!"

The people, who had again flocked close together, forming a passage from the cathedral to the castle portal, only answered by loud scoffs and jeers, gazing with malicious delight upon the beggar's impotent efforts to move. Nobody pitied him—nobody would touch the sorcerer, the outcast.

Suddenly a strong hand was laid upon his shoulder, and Conrad von Burgsdorf cried out: "Away with you! Do you not see that his highness is coming?"

"What is the matter here?" asked a soft, friendly voice. "What is the meaning of this uproarious greeting? What has happened?"

It was the Elector himself who asked these questions —the Elector, who had just returned home from Prague, where he had been to visit the Emperor. He had left his carriage at the cathedral, where the priests and magistrates had met him, and was pursuing his way to the castle on foot.

"Most gracious sir," replied the high chamberlain, shrugging his shoulders, "it seems there has been some dispute among the gaping crowd ending in a brawl, from which it seems that the beggar Claus has emerged so badly that he can not stir from the spot!"

"I do believe it *is* Claus," exclaimed the Elector, stooping over the beggar, who had at last succeeded in raising himself on his knees, and looked up at the Elector with folded hands and deprecating glances. "What has befallen you, Claus? How comes your face to be so bruised and cut?"

"They beat me, sir," said Claus softly. "I believe one of my legs is broken. I do not say this to complain of anybody, but only to excuse myself for not getting up."

"Who did this?" asked the Elector. "Where are the men who solemnize their Sovereign's arrival by beating a poor beggar black and blue?"

As he spoke, Frederick William's eagle eye scanned the multitude on both sides of his path. Kurt, the leech, Fürberg, the tailor, and Wendt, the shoemaker, had, thanks to their robust frames and sinewy arms, attained to the happiness of standing in the foremost ranks, and felt themselves called upon to reply to the Elector's questions.

"Your Electoral Grace," whined the leech, "beggar Claus himself began the affray. Without ground or reason he gave cobbler Ewald such a dreadful blow that he fell down fainting, and well-nigh bled to death."

"Is that true, Claus?" asked the Elector, looking down upon the beggar with amazement.

"Yes, your highness, it is true."

"He can not deny it, your Electoral Grace," cried Fürberg, the tailor. "But that is not all. He afterward had the effrontery to practice some of his black magic before our very eyes."

"He carries a golden box about him," chimed in shoemaker Wendt, "by means of which he summons the devil to his aid. Ewald was as good as dead, when Claus put the golden charm under his nose, and in a little while the cobbler awoke and was strong and lively enough to get up and walk home."

"And then rage and horror seized us, gracious Elector!" cried the leech. "We were determined to cast the devil out of the beggar, to avert misfortune from our dear cities of Berlin and Cologne, so we administered a few wholesome cuffs and knocks to make the devil uncomfortable and force him to leave his tenement. That is the whole story, your Electoral Grace, and the beggar must admit its truth. For the rest, we would not have beaten him if he had voluntarily given us the box by means of which he conjures up the devil."

"Is that so, Claus?" asked the Elector. "Is that the true history of the affair?"

"Yes, your highness, almost true," replied Claus. "Only, *you* know that I am no sorcerer, but only a poor, unhappy wretch, who has once again sinned grievously. In my criminal rage I struck Ewald, but it was only because he had overheard me talking to myself, and was about to profane a name

I never utter myself save to my God and my Elector, by speaking it in mockery before a scoffing multitude."

"But what about that golden box? How came you to have such a costly trinket?"

"Stoop lower, sir, and I will tell you."

The Elector bent over the beggar, who by a mighty effort succeeded in bringing his lips close to the Elector's ear.

They formed a singular group, the Elector, in his magnificent traveling suit of green velvet, set off by large gold buttons, his brown locks surmounted by a round cocked hat, trimmed with gold lace and long white ostrich plumes, and the beggar on his knees before him, in his torn and tattered gray gown, lifting up to his Sovereign his pale, distorted countenance and eyes so touchingly sad. On both sides of this group stood the densely packed crowd, gazing on with breathless attention, all eyes, all ear, all curiosity. Behind the Elector were his glittering train of attendants, the magistrates, and clergy, all stretching their necks, eager to see what was going on and what unforeseen occurrence thus retarded the Elector's progress.

"Sir," said the beggar, putting his lips so close to the Elector's ear and speaking so low that, to the extreme vexation of the bystanders, no one but the Elector could hear a word—"sir, that little golden box was a present from the noblest, fairest, and best of women to her happy husband on their wedding day. In that golden box was a vial of the elixir of life, which the father of that wife, a learned adept of Venice, had discovered and prepared, and of which he maintained that it could save a man from death, and restore to him the vigor of life. That beloved wife believed in the virtue of this elixir, and, placing a vial of the precious liquid in a golden heirloom, the gift of her mother, presented it to the man whom she had blessed with her love. She made him solemnly swear, laying his hand on her heart, never to part with this jewel, but to wear it on a ribbon around his neck as long as he lived. That happy man kept his word all his lifetime. Now, since he is dead, the treasure has fallen to the poor, wretched beggar, who lies here prostrate in the dust, and has nothing else to call his own but grief and bitter

memories. The beggar, though, will faithfully keep the oath given in days of prosperity and joy, and would rather die of hunger than give away that precious memento. But to-day, when in criminal rage he had struck a man, who, indeed, had sorely tempted him, and saw him stretched out before him apparently dying, he felt that he must atone for his misdeed, and, hard as the sacrifice was, open his precious, sacred possession before the curious mob. This he did to save the life of the man whom he had injured. The elixir of the Venetian adept restored Ewald to life, and then the people said that it was done by witchcraft, and wanted to tear my jewel from me. I would not give it up, I was determined to defend it with my life, and had not you come, sir, and your guardsmen driven back the furious mob, they would have conferred upon me the greatest blessing possible, for they would have killed me. I have finished my confession, sir; you know all now."

"I know that these people have acted very cruelly and very foolishly!" cried the Elector, lifting up his head and letting his burning eyes sweep over the multitude with an expression of indignation and grief. "Drive the devil out of your own hearts!" he cried aloud, "and seek him nowhere but in yourselves, for nowhere else is he to be found than in the human heart! You beat and tortured this poor creature because you wanted to cast a devil out of him, and only proved thereby that the devil was in yourselves, for you came very near murdering this poor man. But I charge you to molest Claus no further, and if any one dares to insult him, or attempt to rob him of his little box, he shall be dealt with according to the utmost severity of the laws. In my country there shall be right and justice for every one, beggar as well as prince. Mark that, all of you. And now, go home, good people, and be assured that I shall be a gracious Sovereign to you, if you always perform your duties as good subjects and faithful citizens!"

He nodded kindly to the people and moved on, after he had ordered Burgsdorf to see that a shelter was found for the beggar, and the Electoral surgeon called in his own name to attend upon the sick man and dress his wounded limb.

II.—The Confession.

"And now, my dear lord and husband, tell me how your journey has prospered?" asked the Electress, every feature of her face sparkling with joy as she contemplated her husband.

"Why do you look at me so long and so searchingly, my dear!" asked Frederick William, smiling.

"I will tell you, Frederick!" she cried, throwing her arm around his neck, where he sat near her on the sofa, having just partaken at her side of refreshments for the first time since his arrival—"I will tell you, Frederick, why I was looking at you thus earnestly. I am so happy to see you again. I can not describe to you the weariness of those eight long days of separation. I felt as if the sun never shone and as if the whole heavens were obscured by clouds. And now that I am with you, I find all the missing sunbeams in your presence; all is once more light and cheerful around me. I was looking at you to find out whether this sunshine emanated from your eyes or brow or lips, and——"

"And found," interrupted the Elector, "that it was only a reflection from your own sweet nature, which is benignant as the sun and lustrous as the silvery moon. Yes, dear Louisa, you are an enchantress, for before you all other women lose their charms, and I must admit to you that the fascinating beauties of the imperial court at Prague made no impression upon me. I felt perpetually as if I lacked something, not only at my side, but in myself—as if I were but half a man, and when I reflected upon my feelings I knew perfectly that it was you whom I missed, and that I longed inexpressibly to have you with me."

"Is that true?—is it really true?" cried the Electress exultingly, pressing his hand to her lips. "You still love me, then, Frederick?—still long for me? Oh, thank you, my dear husband, thank you for these words! And, do you know, it gives me courage to ask a question which lies heavy at my heart, and which repeatedly occurred to my thoughts

during those eight dreary days, when I was separated from you for the first time since our marriage."

"So, so, Louisa," said the Elector, smiling, "you have been revolving painful thoughts, and torturing yourself, groundlessly, I am confident. Tell me, dearest, what is your question?"

"Promise me, Frederick, to answer it plainly and sincerely."

"Is it anything so serious, Louisa? Well, I promise to give you a plain, candid answer, to the best of my ability."

She threw both her arms around his neck, and looked tenderly into his eyes. "Frederick," she said softly, "do not scold me, and do not laugh at what I am about to ask you. Indeed, I can not help it. This question has been perpetually recurring to me all these five years of our marriage, and the more affectionate you are, and the more I feel that you love me, the more audibly it sounds in my heart. Out with it, then, that my poor heart may find rest from it and learn its solution. Tell me quickly and briefly, did you marry me for love or reasons of state? Did you for *my* sake reject the alliance with Queen Christina, or did you take me because you could not get her?"

The Elector's countenance, hitherto so bright and animated, was now overshadowed by clouds, and with almost mournful looks he contemplated his wife's excited and expectant face. "Thus it is with you women," he said softly, shaking his head; "not satisfied with having love, you would analyze and dissect it. You are not content with the roses which God has caused to bloom in your pathway, to gladden you with their beauty and their fragrance. No, with your busy little fingers you must ruthlessly tear open the calyx of the rose, and pluck its leaves to pieces to find out whether a single petal may not be shriveled, or of less vivid coloring; true, you discover them all to be faultless, but in the process you have destroyed the whole rose, and scattered your happiness to the winds. Would, Louisa, that you had not put this question; it grieves me, for your sake."

"But you have not answered me," said the Electress, with

animation. "And yet you gave me your word that you would."

"If you insist upon it, I will," replied the Elector, shrugging his shoulders, "and with your permission I shall answer the last part of your question first. I did not take you because I could not get Queen Christina, for, on the contrary, I could have got her, and the Swedish lords would have been well pleased to see me married to their Queen—that is to say, on the conditions which they had proposed. These conditions, however, were of such a nature that it did not comport with my dignity to accept them, and therefore I broke off negotiations, which had been with me a mere matter of policy. Then my thoughts reverted to The Hague, and, as I was reflecting that a closer alliance with the States-General and the Prince of Orange would be a very profitable and pleasant thing for the Elector of Brandenburg, your cousin Frederick William bethought him of his charming little relative at The Hague, whose childish sports he had many a time shared as Electoral Prince, and he wished from the bottom of his heart that he might find in the Princess of Orange, whom reasons of state determined him to choose, the same lovely, innocent child that he had known and loved. So the Elector went to Holland from motives of policy, but your cousin was overjoyed to find that the maiden had more than fulfilled the promise of her childhood, and ripened into a graceful accomplished woman. Your cousin genuinely fell in love with this Princess, whom the Elector wooed, and would have been really desperate if you had preferred the Prince of Wales to himself. Happily you did not, for which God bless you, and for which accept my daily, hourly thanks, for if I do not act the part of the loving swain, yet my love for you has constantly deepened, and to me would seem to need no protestations to convince you of its truth. Rest assured of this, Louisa, that I love you with my whole heart and soul, even though in our daily intercourse I may not wear the semblance of an ardent lover, and though I did not go to The Hague led by enthusiasm without admixture of political motives. The Princess of Orange could obtain from her mother the privilege of only wedding the man of her choice; the Elector of Brandenburg could have allowed him-

self no such privilege, but must have made his heart succumb to the duties of his princely calling; and therefore it was for him a glorious gift of Providence that she whom he had been led to select through motives of policy speedily became the delight of his heart. Now, dearest, I have answered your question fully and truthfully. May I hope that you are satisfied, and do not not repent of having bestowed upon me your proud, unsensitive heart?"

"That is the very thing," whispered the Electress, with tears in her eyes. "I was not proud and unsensitive where you were concerned. On the contrary, I was much too hasty that evening at the pavilion in confessing my love, and betraying to you my greatest secret, that I had always loved you, and could never have married any one else, because my whole heart was yours. I have, dear Frederick, many a time bitterly repented of that confession, and reproached myself with having been bold and unwomanly in so doing. I have often wondered whether you did not despise me for such forwardness, and painfully pondered upon the subject, until these reveries gave rise to the question which you have just answered so beautifully yet so painfully. I now know that it was I alone who loved, and that you would have married me even if I had not pleased you."

"No, Louisa!" cried the Elector, almost angrily, "you did not learn that from anything in my words, and are doing both me and yourself a great injustice! If you had not pleased me, I could not have so wholly subdued the man within as to become the slave of policy. But leave now, I pray you, this painful question. It grieves me, and it does not strike me as wise, to tear aside the veil which is thrown over the sanctuary of the affections to preserve it from rough contact with the outer world. Love and happiness have their mysteries, which should not be rashly penetrated. They resemble a butterfly's wings, which are of too delicate a texture to be rudely touched. I beseech you, dearest, spare the butterfly wings of our love, and do not mar them by your questions, or even by your thoughts. Only confide in my devoted love, and know that I could not live without you, and feel a painful void whenever you are not at my side."

And tenderly kissing her, he pressed her to his heart.

"I beg your pardon, Frederick," whispered Louisa, bravely forcing back the tears which welled up from her heart. "I did wrong in thus tormenting, not myself alone, but you also, and promise you never to forget this hour or the precious words which you have spoken. Never again shall I vex you with such questions. I shall place a guard over my thoughts, too, and with fervent gratitude daily thank God that you love me now, and that I am not merely the Elector's consort, but the wife of his affections. And now, away with melancholy and vexatious thoughts! You shall always see me cheerful and happy, as the chosen of your heart should be. Then tell me, my dear lord, how it fared with you in Prague. Was the Emperor's Majesty right gracious and friendly?"

"Yes, right gracious and friendly," replied the Elector, smiling. "The Emperor came to meet me a half mile without the city, attended by a splendid retinue. He himself rode in a coach of state drawn by eight horses, the little Prince of Hungary seated at his side. Sixty coaches, drawn by four horses, followed the imperial equipage, and the Emperor's life-guardsmen wore the handsomest uniforms."

"I think you could well compare with them in that respect," said the Electress eagerly. "I assure you it was a most imposing spectacle to look upon, when eight days ago you left Berlin with your glittering train, and with pride I beheld the magnificent procession. The coaches I did not count, but——"

"Well, well, do not grow warm on the subject," interposed the Elector. "We certainly made quite a fine display, although we were only attended by forty carriages, drawn by four horses, and a retinue of two hundred persons. So, at least, it semed to strike Count Seckendorf, whom the Emperor sent forward to the Bohemian frontier, that he might welcome me and arrange the order of ceremonies. Seckendorf exclaimed with astonishment at the sight of our escort, and, shaking his head, presumed that his Majesty was not prepared for such magnificence on the part of the Elector of Brandenburg. I, in my turn, intimated to the officious count that a sovereign German Prince felt at liberty to appear be-

fore the Emperor in such state as he might himself deem fit, and the greater his expenditure, the greater the reverence manifested for the Emperor's Majesty. So Seckendorf was obliged to forbear any further criticism upon my retinue, and, after we had settled the order of ceremonies, we proceeded on our journey to Prague."

"And how was the ceremonial arranged?" asked the Electress eagerly. "Was it satisfactory to my proud and noble lord, and had you no mortifications to undergo?"

"Why, at first," replied the Elector, shrugging his shoulders, "there was quite a pompous display of Spanish grandeeship, and a great array of claims and pretensions. I soon, however, gave the master of ceremonies to understand that times had altered a little, since the Peace of Westphalia had guaranteed the rights of sovereignty to the several princes of Germany, and that consequently the Elector of Brandenburg no longer appeared before the Emperor as a submissive vassal and humble servant, but rather as a Sovereign and independent ruler. At the same time he hoped never to be found wanting in the reverence and devotion due to the anointed head of the Holy German Empire."

"That was bravely and wisely answered," cried the Electress, with beaming eyes. "Oh, how I delight in your proud and glorious nature!"

"Softly, softly, Louisa," said Frederick William, sighing. "One thing I could not obtain exemption from, which worried me not a little, and was not particularly enjoyable to one of the proud, glorious nature which you are pleased to attribute to me. As soon as the Emperor's coach came in sight I was obliged to leave my carriage, and go to meet him, bareheaded and on foot, while the Emperor did not alight from his coach until I was within ten steps of him, and met me with covered head. Then, as we stood close together, I slightly bent my knee, and reverentially took the hand which the Emperor extended to me."

"And you had to kiss that hand?" asked Louisa, blushing.

"I must at least seem to do so, and I accordingly touched it with the tip of my nose," replied the Elector. "After all,

it was not so bad as fourteen years ago, when I was obliged to kneel before the King of Poland, and swear allegiance to him. I could but feel that I had made some progress in the upward path since I first assumed the reins of government. With this thought I consoled myself, and cheerfully submitted to all further irksome restraints of etiquette, until gradually the exalted lords descended a little from their dignity, and I was even invited to sit at table with the Emperor, although the master of ceremonies informed me that it was an unwonted and peculiar condescension on the part of his Imperial Majesty."

"You conquered the haughty Sovereign by your amiability!" cried the Electress, looking at her husband with radiant eyes. "He could not resist your noble, princely bearing, and was forced to bow before your greatness."

"Oh, no," said the Elector, smiling, "he had no such fantastic notions. It only happened because he thought that I could subserve his interests at the approaching Diet, by giving my vote and influence to electing his son Roman King, and consequently his successor in the imperial dignity. I easily penetrated this motive for condescension, and determined to draw my advantage from it as well. I had accepted the Emperor's invitation to Prague because I was weary of perpetual correspondence, and knew that I could accomplish more in a half hour's conversation than by weeks of writing, and also because I hoped by means of the Emperor's decisive sentence to rid myself and my country of the burdensome guests who still force themselves upon us, and have well-nigh ruined the Mark."

"The Swedes, you mean?" asked the Electress.

"Yes, the Swedes," replied the Elector, with warmth. "They imposed hard conditions upon me that time at Münster, and made shameless demands. I would never have consented to them if I had not wished to do my part toward giving peace to Germany after her thirty years of war. Therefore I yielded. The Peace of Westphalia * brought the longed-for peace, and I may boast of having had a large share in bringing it about and of having suffered for the common

* 1648.

good. I agreed to resign to Sweden all of Upper Pomerania, a part of Lower Pomerania, and the island of Rügen, although it grieved me sorely to give away the fairest portion of my rightful and undoubted heritage."

"Thank God, though, that you were reimbursed in part," consoled the Electress, "and in their stead obtained the bishoprics of Halberstadt and Minden, the county of Hohenstein, and the archbishopric of Magdeburg."

"Only see how learned my charming Electress is!" cried Frederick William, with tender looks. "You name off our possessions with such glibness that it is plain to see what a fine housewife you are. Yet your calculations are not quite correct, for they took from me more than they gave, and I shall never cease to mourn over having been forced to relinquish Stettin and the mouths of the Oder, and never be satisfied until I have regained Pomerania and rescued from the Swedes what is my own. Had I not inwardly promised this to myself, I should never have summoned sufficient resolution to sign the protocol to the peace at Osnabrück, and would feel as if I had committed a crime. But trust me, Louisa; I shall never rest until I can again number Pomerania in the list of my possessions, for it shall not be told of me in history that I forsook what was my own, and did not demand again with the sword what I had been forced to resign by the pen."

"It is written in your eyes, Frederick William, that you *will* make the demand!" cried the Electress, looking with fond enthusiasm into her husband's excited face, "and history will have something glorious and great to narrate of the Elector Frederick William of Brandenburg. I feel it as plainly in the depths of my heart as if it were a revelation to me from on high."

"And may you be a true prophetess of my fortune," said Frederick William, laying his hand as if in blessing upon his wife's head. "To you, beloved wife of my heart, I pour out my whole soul, and when, as now, I sit beside you and share with you my most secret thoughts and plans, my heart leaps up in joy and I feel that I am a happy man: yet something is wanting to the Elector: he lacks the highest, fairest

gift that earth can offer man—he lacks fame. The immortality of the soul comes to all through the grace of God, but an imperishable name upon earth, celebrity after death, which is better than life itself, is the attainment of but few through their own great deeds. I aspire to belong to those few, Louisa. I would transform the little Elector of Brandenburg into a great Elector, and out of these petty, dismembered provinces consolidate a strong and mighty kingdom. Fame, fame!—that is the ideal for whose attainment I strive with spirit and determination, cheerfulness and energy, but at the same time with humility and submission to the will of God."

"And you will attain it, my Frederick! Already have you victoriously taken the first steps upon the road to fame. To your zeal, firmness, and self-sacrificing spirit is Germany in great measure indebted for the Peace of Westphalia. You it was who procured religious liberty for the Lutherans and Calvinists, and, in opposition to Austria, Bavaria, and all the Catholic princes, secured equality of rights to all religious creeds. Truly, this was no trivial service; and for this, doubtless, every Protestant feels grateful to you, remembering you in each prayer he now uplifts to God, oppressed by no fear, visited by no persecution."

"Ah, my Louisa, you are mistaken there," sighed the Elector. "There are many, alas! even among the evangelical party, who, in no Christian or forgiving spirit, are enraged that I have striven for religious freedom for *all*. That the Catholic priests should denounce me as a heretic, I am not surprised, but that the Lutheran preachers, too, in fanatical zeal should lift up their voices against me, because I placed the Reformists on the same footing with the Lutherans, does indeed grieve me to the quick—not merely because I, like you, belong to the Reform Church, but because thereby discord and dissension are sowed by those whose especial duty it is to inculcate peace and charity among men. I am determined to go seriously to work in this matter, and prove to these Lutheran zealots that toleration is no empty word within the limits of my domains but that every man shall worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. Woe to those fanatics who would endeavor to prove that the Cal-

vinists are not numbered among those attached to the Augsburg Confession of Faith, and therefore not worthy to enjoy equal privileges with the Lutherans! I will not suffer such arrogance, but punish them according to the letter of the law.

"Forgive me, Louisa, for speaking with such warmth in your presence," continued the Elector, after a short pause; "it results from a fanatical priest's having dared, in the course of my journey, to preach in my very presence against toleration of Calvinists. I had him summoned before me, and, after lecturing him severely, threatened him with degradation if he continued to speak of Lutherans and Calvinists as opponents in creed instead of brothers in the faith. But enough of such things, Louisa. I am once more at home, I am once more with you—what more could I ask? My journey, too, has been crowned with success, for the Emperor declared my representations and complaints against Sweden justifiable, and issued a proclamation refusing to acknowledge Queen Christina mistress of Upper Pomerania, or to allow her a seat or vote in the Diet until my portion of Pomerania had been cleared of Swedish troops. That is all I ask as a preliminary, and Sweden will have to heed so stringent a warning; my unhappy land will be freed from its worst plague. And now, dearest, come and let us see what Memmhart has been doing all this while in the castle, and how far the building has progressed. I should also like to walk with you through the garden and your hothouses."

"That is to say," exclaimed the Electress joyfully—"that is to say, you will give me an hour of happiness, and make up to me for our long separation. Yes, come, dear Frederick, let us inspect the building, and then go down into the garden."

III.—Castle Building.

Arm in arm the Electoral pair left their cozy sitting room and stepped into the antechamber, where the master builder already awaited them, in obedience to a summons from his lord.

"Well, Memmhart!" cried the Elector as he greeted him, "let me see what you have accomplished, and whether you will indeed succeed in erecting for us a stately and imposing residence!"

"Your highness," gravely responded the master builder, "I fear, alas! that I shall not succeed."

"And why do you fear that?" quickly asked the Elector. "And why so sad, Memmhart—you who always used to be so cheerful and lively? Speak, man, and tell me what ails you."

"Most gracious sir," said Memmhart gloomily, "nothing ails me, save that the whole work is at a standstill, and during the eight days of your highness's absence nothing at all has been done. My trouble may be summed up in this, most noble sir: we have no money."

"What!" exclaimed the Elector, in a tone of surprise, "no money! Did I not, two years ago, bid the castellan lay aside annually one thousand dollars for building, and hand over that sum to you?"

"The castellan did so, your highness, but the sum proved insufficient. The very first year there was a deficit, which we covered by drawing upon the next year's capital. The second year the arrears were so much greater that we could scarcely cover them by advancing the whole allowance for the third year. Since then there has been a perfect dearth of money; we can no longer pay the artisans and mechanics; long they dunned us, then grumbled, and at last grew desperate. I am forced to tell your Electoral Grace all this, for hardly had your highness set out eight days ago when the workmen made a sort of strike. The painters, bricklayers, and all the other mechanics unanimously declared that they would work no more until the wages already due were paid them. In vain

I tried to appease the people, and bring them to reason. To all my remonstrances they gave answer, 'Pay us first the wages we have already earned, and then we will go on working.'"

"That was a condition difficult to comply with in the circumstances, I fear," said the Elector.

"Yes, your highness, unless I had been endowed with the powers of an alchemist I could not, for money there was none. This I was obliged to confess, and forthwith painter Hirt, who was at work upon the ceiling of the new chamber, laid aside brush and pallet and left the Venus he was painting with one cheek highly flushed, the other pale, and sitting upon a one-legged chair. The other artisans followed, and you can hardly imagine anything more wretched than the actual state of affairs, with rain pouring through unfinished ceilings and everything at a standstill."

"But, man!" cried the Elector, "as I came across the castle square the hands were upon the scaffolding, and you standing in their midst!"

"Yes, your highness, that was just to-day. I pleaded with them so earnestly and made such good promises that the men at last consented to come for a half day, in order not to give your highness vexation on your arrival, but to present at least the appearance of being at work."

"Thank you, Memmhart," said the Electress warmly, offering her hand to the master builder. "That was handsomely done, and I thank you for having spared his highness vexation, at least during his first moments at home."

"Ah, Electress! would that I could have done so longer! —But," he continued to the Elector, "the men would only come after I had given them my word to lay the whole matter before your highness so soon as I should be admitted to an audience. I must premise, however, that I have lately been wrought up to such a state of chagrin and despair that I am actually weary of my life: on the one hand perpetually pursued by the workmen for the payment of their dues, and on the other compelled to listen to the castellan's assurances that he has no money. With all submission, therefore, I would humbly beseech your highness to appoint some one accountant

in my place, that the masons, carpenters, painters, sculptors, and all the rest may cease to torment me with their applications."

"This is indeed a bad case," said the Elector, thoughtfully pacing the floor, and not remarking that the Electress had left his side and returned to her own apartment. "Yes, this is very bad. We can not leave our house in its present most wretched condition. It is not fit that the Electoral mansion should wear the semblance of an old owl's nest; that the Electress should have no retreat from a driving shower; that the old staircases should creak and groan under the lightest footstep; and that we should not have a single decent drawing room in which to entertain our guests. The building must go on, yet—I must acknowledge I know not where the funds are to be found. The obstinate States will not, I fear, grant me a tax for the refitting of the castle. What shall we do, Memmhart, and how contrive to get out of this difficulty?"

"Alas! I know not, your highness! I only know that it will require the utmost diligence to complete the new roofing before winter sets in, and also to get the new guest chambers ready. But the workmen will do nothing without money, and unless your highness will open your purse and undertake the payment——"

"To open my purse is easy enough, but to find anything within, there's the rub. I really do not know——"

"But I know what to do, my husband!" exclaimed the Electress, who had returned to the antechamber, bearing in both hands a large leather-covered box, whose edges and corners were studded with gold-headed nails. "Master builder Memmhart, have the goodness to name the sum you owe the workmen in the Elector's name?"

"But, my dear, what would you do?" asked Frederick William, gently detaining the hand with which the Electress was on the point of lifting the lid of her box. "You will not open your casket to satisfy these rude, clownish mechanics?"

"Certainly I will, my lord," replied Louisa. "Surely, as a frugal housewife I may be allowed to contribute my mite toward filling up the holes in the magnanimous Elector's

purse made by the necessities of the country. Were all princes as generous toward their subjects as you are they would all have empty coffers, and be straitened in their personal expenditures. You make me heartily ashamed that my box is not empty, and I beg you to allow me to atone for my fault and learn from your example to empty my purse."

The Elector made no reply at first, but gazed long and tenderly upon his wife's animated countenance, and his eyes, usually so brilliant, were seen as through a veil of mist.

"Louisa," he whispered, "you are not merely good, you are magnanimous. God bless you!"

He took her hand and pressed it to his lips, and when he released it there sparkled on it something like a dewdrop or a diamond. To Louisa it was both diamond and dewdrop—a most precious token of her husband's love.

"Well, Herr Memmhart," she said cheerfully, "tell me now how much you owe?"

"Most gracious highness, I know that to a cent," said Memmhart, drawing some papers from his pocket. "All the workmen rendered me their accounts, and I promised to lay them before the Elector, that his highness might look over them himself and see that the people had not been exorbitant in their demands."

"Have you not examined these accounts yourself, Memmhart?" asked the Elector.

"Certainly I have, your highness; but it is my wish also that your highness may be pleased to convince yourself that there have been no unnecessary expenditures."

"Your word is altogether sufficient for that," said the Elector, with dignity. "Put up your accounts, and——"

"Pardon me!" cried the Electress eagerly; "that was spoken like a noble, high-spirited Prince, and as was due Herr Memmhart. But for our own improvement, it is well to know the value of things. With your gracious permission *I* will look over these accounts, in order to learn what outlay is needful in erecting such a building."

"Do so, my precious little wife," said the Elector, nodding approvingly. "I know Memmhart will feel much com-

plimented by your grace's condescending to interest yourself in these affairs."

"I am perfectly charmed at it, most gracious lady!" cried the master builder joyfully. "We work with redoubled ardor when we know that a sympathizing eye is watching us with interest."

"Then let us hear how much money you need at present," said Louisa, setting down her box on the table of carved oakwood which stood in the middle of the room, and opening it. "Let us hear. Name the sum total now, and hereafter I will examine the accounts more closely in detail."

But the master builder did not answer, looking down in seeming confusion at the papers in his hand.

"Well?" asked the Elector. "Did you not hear the Electress's order, Memmhart?"

"I heard, your highness; but believe it would be better if the Electress would be pleased to let me mention each item, and pay in that way."

"Oh, I understand!" exclaimed the Elector, laughing. "You think she would probably shut the lid of her box in dismay, and retreat with it to her room?"

"Yes, your highness, about so!"

"You are mistaken, if you think it would make the whole seem less to her grace by proceeding in this manner. The Electress has a quick head and is a clever arithmetician. It is better, Memmhart, to risk the whole upon one stake, and sum up the entire register of your sins in a single amount."

"Gracious sir, I dare not," sighed Memmhart, "and it must at least be allowed me to state the number of men among whom this sum is to be divided. There is the master mason with six apprentices, and the carpenter, whom your grace sent for from Holland. Then there are the new locksmith from France, painter Hirt with two assistants, and——"

"Enough, enough!" interposed the Electress. "I can already see that the sum must be very great. I know something about building, because I had a house erected on my farm at The Hague. Since you hesitate to name the sum, master builder, permit me to guess it. How long have you been in debt to the men?"

"Four months, gracious lady."

"Well," said the Electress, after short reflection, "that will of course mount up to a considerable sum, for labor is dear, and, besides, there are the painters, artists, and sculptors!"

"Let us hear, Electress!" cried Frederick William gayly. "I am really curious to learn how far your knowledge goes in these matters. Give us your guess."

"I think," said the Electress thoughtfully, "it will probably amount to five thousand dollars."

"Heaven be praised, no!" cried the master builder, breathing more freely, "the amount runs not so high."

"Well, four thousand then?"

"Still less, gracious lady," said Memmhart, whose countenance began to brighten.

"For the last time, only three thousand?" asked Louisa, smiling.

"No, gracious lady, only two thousand four hundred dollars."

"Ah, your highness," said the Electress, turning to her husband, "you may congratulate yourself on possessing the services of a master builder, at once so economical and so skillful as a director. He who in four months gives so many workmen only two thousand four hundred dollars must certainly select his employees with judgment, and keep them under good control. Here, Herr Memmhart, are the two thousand four hundred dollars, to which I add six hundred in advance. One can always purchase to greater advantage for ready money, and workmen are more diligent when their wages are punctually paid. Here, take these three rolls—each of them contains a thousand dollars in gold."

Memmhart approached the Electress to take the money, which she had laid upon the table, but before doing so, bent his knee before her, deep emotion expressed in his face.

"Electress," he said feelingly, "I am nothing but a plain man, knowing little of the forms of courtly etiquette. Forgive me, then, if I do not express myself with the polished ease of a courtier. But I must tell you that your highness has to-day appeared in the light of an angel, and poured heavenly balsam into my heart by your noble and precious words.

Well do I know that out of divine compassion you named such high sums, that your grace might appear to be astonished at the smallness of an amount which was indeed considerable. But in the depths of my soul I thank your grace for this tenderness and goodness, and will now, with renewed spirit, prosecute my difficult task, for I know that the eye of an angel will watch over me. Permit me, most gracious highness, to press your hand to my lips, and with a reverential kiss to swear that I dedicate my whole life to the service of my beloved lord and Elector."

"I accept your vow, master, and rejoice in it," said the Electress; "but before I give you my hand to kiss, rise from your knees, for it befits not an artist to bend the knee before a fellow-mortal. And now take my hand, and with it my thanks for your faithfulness and zeal."

"And accept my thanks too, Memmhart," said the Elector, with a friendly nod. "You are a clever master builder, and so far your alterations please me greatly. I only wish that the old wing to the castle were pulled down, for in my eyes it disfigures the whole house."

"Oh, your Electoral Grace," cheerfully exclaimed Memmhart, "everything shall be done now, and the building will progress with such speed that I know your highness will be pleased."

"Let it be a grand and glorious edifice," said the Elector warmly. "I would leave it as a memento of myself and my times, and construct for my heirs a strong castle, in which they may feel secure from all the storms of life, and occasionally, too, think gratefully of the ancestor who toiled, built, and battled for them. Memmhart, let us erect a firm, enduring edifice—no card house, that will speedily be blown away by the storms of time. A solid pile of masonry, resting on a sure foundation, let it rear its proud front before the eyes of men. Yet in the sight of God it will be nought but a hut, and its inhabitants of no more value than the meanest beggar who walks the street."

The Electress, who had gone to restore her box to its place, now re-entered the antechamber, and laid her hand on her husband's arm.

"Permit me to remind you that you promised to take a little walk with me through the garden. I would like also to show you two new plants which I received yesterday for my vegetable garden from my mother at The Hague."

"Let us go, Electress. I have only one more question to put to Memmhart. You just now spoke of having a French locksmith in your employ. How is it that you do not encourage native workmen in that line?"

"Ah, gracious sir, our native locksmiths only understand rough work. Common door latches, stone doors, and such like they can make, but none of these smiths could possibly have done such things as this Frenchman accomplished in a short space of time."

"Tell me some of the wonderful things this Frenchman has done."

"Gracious sir, what is very important and ingenious, he has fitted the doors with good latches and handles, catching so perfectly that the doors can not, as hitherto, flap to and fro at the slightest puff of wind which passes. Besides this, he has put locks on the main castle doors, which can be fastened with keys, instead of the iron bolts, which answered well enough when a person wished to secure his room on the inside, but left him no means of closing his chamber from the outside. So I have already got this French locksmith to attach locks, with keys fitting, to six of the castle doors." *

"I like that," said the Elector, "and all the doors shall be furnished with such locks and keys. We need not then employ so many porters and doorkeepers, for if the doors are locked, the sentinels will be sufficient to guard the castle. Keys, keys, then, Memmhart! And now, Electress, favor me with your arm. Let us go down into the pleasure garden."

He nodded in friendly manner to the master builder, and with his wife repaired to the grand corridor, which they had to traverse before reaching the principal staircase.

* See King, Pictures of Berlin, vol. ii, p. 64.

IV.—The First Cauliflower.

The Elector walked along silently, absorbed in thought, only occasionally pausing before the doors which opened upon the corridor, and examining with searching looks their old rusty latches and heavy bolts.

"These do look abominably," he said, at last. "I never thought of it before, but now it strikes me as strange that we have hitherto had no way of locking our doors. Say, Louisa, how is it at the Stadtholder's court?—have *they* no locks either?"

"Oh, yes, Frederick," said she, smiling. "They have a key to every door; and my dear countrymen would be shocked if they could not leave their handsome drawing rooms and rich furniture under lock and key in their absence."

"But yet you have been obliged here to put up with having no keys to your apartments," remarked the Elector gloomily.

"Oh, I—what use have I for keys? I have no secrets, and, moreover, belong no longer to Holland, but to Germany. True, I am a poor German in point of speech, but thoroughly German in thought and feeling, and more especially in heart and soul a Brandenburger. On my first arrival here I was touched and edified by finding no locks upon the doors, but everything standing open without any one seeming to fear theft or treason. I thought, how innocent and guileless life must be in a country where the Prince does not find it necessary to turn the key against the urgency of petitioners or the rudeness of assailants! Such a state of nature would be impossible save among a simple, truthful, and uncorrupt people; with cultivation and refinement of manners such innocence and harmlessness vanish."

"You always find a bright side to everything," said Frederick William, slowly shaking his head. "But you must admit that we are wanting in that very refinement and cultivation of which you speak, and that our subjects are in a sadly primitive state of rudeness. The long bloody war swept away all vestiges of high culture, and hunted all the arts and sci-

ences from our much-to-be-pitied land. But I will not waste time in vain laments, but reflect that my own mission is only so much the more great and glorious. God has given me a noble task, in which you, my beloved partner, must take your share. Yes, Louisa, be it our task to civilize and enlighten our subjects, and to make our country the chosen home of art and science. This is our task, and one well worthy the exertions of a lifetime. To this end may God grant us his blessing and a long peace, which is the first condition of success. If our plans prosper, as I hope, in ten years my Brandenburg smiths will be able to put locks upon our doors, and we shall have no occasion to import foreign workmen or foreign goods."

"You will make an exception in favor of my Dutch milkmaids and farm servants, I know," said the Electress with a sweet smile. "You may understand more of arts and sciences in Germany, but of the dairy and farm work you just know nothing at all. Your gardening, too, is a pitiful affair; and I am glad that I came here as a Dutch woman rather than as a Dutch bulb, for then I should certainly have met with an untimely end. For they know nothing of tulips and their nurture here, and have no idea of their rarity and value. Only think, I received yesterday a present from my mother of some fruits and flowers, which my gardener unpacked and brought to me. I missed the twelve tulip bulbs, of which my mother had written to me that they were specimens of the newest and most splendid varieties, and that I must take great care of them, for they were a little fortune in themselves. I questioned the gardener about the bulbs, and he replied that he had carried them to the kitchen and tried one himself. But they had no peculiar flavor, and he thought our own onions were much sharper and better."

The Elector laughed. "That was truly a glorious *quid pro quo*, and I can imagine your consternation. What was the end of it?—did you rescue any, or were all the bulbs consumed?"

"I am thankful to say, no. In my dismay, I ran straight to the kitchen, calling out for my bulbs, and, lo! there in a corner stood a scullion, who, just as I unexpectedly entered

the door, was in the act of biting a bulb to give relish to a huge slice of buttered bread which he held in his hand. Unceremoniously I snatched the precious root from the lad, and to my great joy descried the other ten lying uninjured on the table. I gathered them up in my dress and rushed out before the cooks and scullions had recovered from their shock."

"That is best of all," cried the Elector, laughing, "and I should like to have seen you alighting like a fairy in the kitchen and enchanting all its occupants by your charming apparition. But what is this?" he burst forth, as he stepped from the staircase into the large vestibule, on the opposite side of which was the grand door of entrance to the castle. "What means this? Where is the porter? How comes it that he is not at his post?"

But no one was there to answer the Elector's query, and not until after he had several times raised his loud, ringing voice did a lackey come rushing in to ask what were his highness's commands.

"Where is the porter?" asked the Elector. "How comes it that the door is left unguarded?"

"Your Electoral Grace," said the lackey timidly, "I believe the porter has been taken sick."

"Then there are people who can take his place. Why did they not call one of the four doorkeepers?"

"I do not know, your Electoral Grace," stammered forth the lackey, with downcast eyes and an air of embarrassment. "I do not know, but I rather think they are sick, too; and," added he in an undertone, "the other porter is sick also."

"What?" cried the Elector. "Has an epidemic broken out among my doorkeepers, and—— Ah! there comes our castellan von Arnim himself. Hark, Arnim!" he called out to the officer, who came hurrying forward; "explain why there is no porter here. And what is this Fritz says about all the doorkeepers having fallen sick?"

"Sick, your highness?" repeated Herr von Arnim, while pale and terror-stricken Fritz retreated into the most remote corner of the vestibule. "Would that the fellows had been taken sick, and that that was the cause of their absence!"

"There is some other cause, then, for their absence? Speak

out boldly, Arnim; do not look as melancholy as an owl, but tell me plainly where my porters are?"

"Most gracious sir, if you command me to speak, then I must say—that they have run away."

"Run away! For what? Have you been chastising them with a high hand lately, and did they take to their heels for fear of the rod?"

"O your highness! they would not have run off for such a thing as that. They are used to being beaten: it belongs to the office."

"Well, what is it then, Arnim?"

"If I must speak, your highness, the fellows ran off because I have not paid them any wages for half a year." *

For a minute the Elector looked at him in amazement, then suddenly broke out into a merry laugh, and turned gayly to his wife.

"Come," he said quickly, "let us make haste into the garden, else your cash box will be in great peril. It seems to me as if the whole world had conspired to make an attack upon it to-day because they know what a noble, generous heart you have. Come, Electress, let us make our escape into the freedom of the open air."

He drew his wife's arm within his own, and smilingly led her to the back of the vestibule, where was situated the little side door, through which they reached the little retired garden lying on the Spree side of the castle. But before he crossed the threshold of this door the Elector once more turned to the castellan, who had followed in reverential silence, while the lackey had again summoned up sufficient courage to hasten forward and open the door for his master and mistress.

"Arnim," said the Elector, "I can only advise you to address yourself to Memmhart. He will tell you of a way in which doorkeepers can be procured to do their work well without either demanding wages or having the ability to run away. Apply to Memmhart."

He nodded pleasantly to the castellan and then followed his wife, who had already descended the two granite steps leading into the garden. The Elector dismissed the lackey,

* Historical. *Vide* King, History of Berlin, vol. ii, p. 66.

who had stationed himself on the outside of the door, with a wave of his hand, for which the Electress thanked him by a beaming smile.

"It is so delightful to be alone with you, Frederick!" she said, "and, unobserved by human eyes, to enjoy innocent communion with nature. And, oh, I am so glad and happy. You are with me, and God is above me, around us stand the trees in their autumn foliage, and the flowers look up at us from the beds, as if they were angel eyes greeting us with smiles, and bidding you a glad welcome."

"Thank you, dear flowers," said the Elector, cheerfully nodding on all sides to the flowers, which were prettily arranged on the borders. "Thank you. Your Queen has interpreted your welcome to me. But now bow down, all of you, and salute with reverence and admiration the lovely living rose who has spoken for you."

And as if the flowers made haste to obey the Elector's mandate, they all at once bowed upon their stalks, swayed by a gust of wind which had just ruffled the waters of the Spree and now swept over the garden. The Electress gave a silvery laugh, in which Frederick William merrily joined.

"You see," exclaimed Louisa, "that the flowers have ears. They understood your words and obeyed your orders, like well-disciplined soldiers. And now look around you, Frederick, and say if it is not delightful here, and far more agreeable than the spacious, more showy pleasure garden at its side."

"Yes, it is indeed delightful here, and makes one feel light and glad at heart," cried the Elector. "Let me inhale full draughts of the fresh air, and shake from me all the dust of the world. Ah! how foolish we men are to struggle and strive after other things, instead of being content with the quiet pleasures of domestic and rural life! Did I not say just now that I was ambitious and longed for fame? That was foolish, and is true no longer. Here in the garden, at my dear one's side, I am no more conscious of the feelings and aspirations of the ambitious Elector. Let him up in his gloomy castle forge plans and devise schemes for becoming great and glorious, but down here in the garden he is only a harmless man, enjoying the sunshine and the flowers."

"And to this dear, harmless man will I show the novelties I got yesterday from The Hague," said Louisa. "Come, my Frederick, I have had them all spread out on the table in the little pavilion, and there you shall see all my treasures."

She slipped her hand through her husband's arm, and with light step and cheerful countenances the handsome, happy pair followed the path between the flower beds which led to the greenhouses at the end of the Electress's garden. The first compartment of this greenhouse, in which the flowers were arranged upon scaffolds, they quickly traversed, and then entered the pavilion, which was between the two greenhouses and united them together. Here, on a round table, lay various kinds of seeds, bulbs, and plants, and with bright countenance the Electress enumerated to her husband the high-sounding names of the tulips and other new and rare plants.

"But what strange flower is this?" asked the Elector, pointing to a plant that was nicely packed in paper, from which peeped out only a few white umbels and greenish leaves.

"This, my dear," said the Electress, with important air—"this is something quite peculiar, which my mother recommends as a delicious vegetable. This plant was sent to her from the colonies beyond the sea, and she has been cultivating it for a year at The Hague in her forcing beds and hothouses. It is a flower and vegetable at the same time, and my mother therefore named it cauliflower, and has sent with the plant a receipt for preparing it in a palatable manner. Besides these three full-grown specimens, my mother sent me quite a number of young plants, and she writes me that these plants, after lying in water for twenty-four hours to freshen them up, must be set out in a hotbed, when they will furnish us the finest heads of cauliflower in six months, for this is a vegetable which will certainly thrive with us."

"And were the plants put in water?" asked the Elector, with interest.

"Certainly; they were immediately cared for. See, there they are in that great tub; and what a fine parcel of them there is!"

"A fine parcel, indeed," said Frederick William, entering the second greenhouse, where the hotbeds were. "And do

you know, Louisa, since this is a new plant, which we would naturalize among us, I think we must honor it by planting it in our soil ourselves. We are the heads of the people, and whatsoever new thing the land produces it must receive through us."

"Ah, Frederick! that is a happy thought! Yes, my lord, it befits you to cherish your country, and the blessing of your beloved hand will sink with the new plant into the soil. Yes, *we* must plant the cauliflower, we alone! The bed is already prepared for their reception. Come now, let me hold the plants, and you shall put them in the ground."

She bent down over the tub and drew out the tender little green plants, and, after letting the water drip from them, carried them carefully to the hotbed, whose sash was already raised and propped.

With smiling looks the Elector followed her, and Louisa handed him a little plant.

"There," she said, "the solemn moment has come, when the Elector Frederick William of Brandenburg plants the first cauliflower in his dominions.* Bow down, Sir Elector, and begin your work."

"Tell me how to begin and how to put the little thing in the ground," said the Elector, kneeling down and holding up the plant which his wife had given him.

"Now take the forefinger of your right hand," were Louisa's instructions, "and bore a hole with it in the ground. Then carefully insert in this the roots of the plant, press the soil close around the stem just below the leaves, and all will be done."

The Elector strictly followed her directions, and had the satisfaction of seeing the first specimen of his own planting lift up its fresh leaves, in pretty contrast with the rich black earth around.

"May you live and thrive, little plant," he said, smiling—"may you grow to be great and large. Then bear seed and be the parent of long generations of your fellows, that the generations of mankind may be gladdened thereby. You are to nourish man, and a high destiny that is for such a small wee

* Historical. See Orlich, History of the Great Elector.

thing as you. Therefore, I put you in the ground and rejoice over you, little one. Now give me another, Louisa, and tell me where to plant it."

"Two handbreadths from the first, Frederick, and in a straight line with it. Plants must stand in as regular rank and file as the soldiers in your bodyguard."

The Elector made another hole in the ground and inserted the plant. Then he planted a third and a fourth, and so diligently did he work that he became perfectly silent, and his forehead was covered with perspiration. Still he knelt, restlessly continuing his task, while the Electress stood by watching its progress with beaming eyes and the greatest interest.

"Good heavens! what do I see?" suddenly exclaimed some one behind them. "His grace the Elector on his knees, and playing the gardener!"

"Yes, Lord Chamberlain von Burgsdorf," said the Elector, who continued his work without even looking up at Burgsdorf, who stood within the pavilion door and was gazing in astonishment upon the group before him. "Yes, the Elector is on his knees, and playing the gardener. Have you any objection, old friend?"

"None at all, gracious sir," quickly responded Burgsdorf. "Only, I humbly beg your highness to excuse me from taking any share in your labors."

"That *I* would by no means permit," said the Electress quickly. "The lord high chamberlain has nothing to do with my plants, more especially in my own garden."

The high chamberlain's face darkened a little. "I beg your grace's pardon for having dared to intrude here," he said. "But I have just learned that out on Hare Heath a whole herd of deer have showed themselves. Moreover, the peasants out there are in the greatest state of desperation, for every night the hares from Hare Heath come into their fields and destroy all their cabbage. The poor people can not help themselves, and therefore beseech us to organize a regular hare chase. Now, the weather is splendid to-day, and there will be the finest moonshine to-night, so that I thought I would propose to your grace to ride out upon Hare Heath to-day and hunt a little while."

"Yes, indeed, that will I!" cried the Elector, quickly rising. "We must have a hunt. As we have planted our own cabbage, Electress, we must now see to it that our hares do not eat up that belonging to the poor peasants."

The sunshine of happiness on the Electress's countenance had faded away, and a light cloud shaded her brow.

"You do not merit my thanks, lord chamberlain," said she, "for coming into my garden to take away my husband, who has just returned to me after a long absence, and needs a little rest and refreshment after the fatigue he has undergone. I entreat you, my husband, just for this once to give up the chase for *my* sake and stay at home. Is not one happy day due me after eight of solitude?"

She looked at her husband with such soft, pleading eyes that he had not the power to resist, and smilingly nodded his consent.

"You shall have your wish, Electress," he said. "I shall stay at home to-day, and commit the chase to Burgsdorf and his companions. Besides, I have much business to attend to, and must meet with the members of my cabinet council."

"Your highness refuses to join me, then?" said Burgsdorf, much crestfallen. "There will be no hunting to-day?"

"Hunt away as much as you like, only I shall not be of the party."

"Oh," sighed Burgsdorf, "if your highness is not there nothing will go on right, and there will be no pleasure for anybody. Heigh-ho! I see the good old times have gone forever, and our most gracious lord turns away from us!"

"In what do you note that, old growler?" asked the Elector, who, with his wife on his arm, was slowly returning through the pavilion and hothouse to the garden, while Burgsdorf walked on his other side.

"I note it in everything," cried Burgsdorf with an outbreak of ill humor. "All is changed, and, as our old gray castle is assuming a new and elegant exterior, so we will all have to step softly and delicately if we would find favor in the eyes of our beloved Elector."

"Do you, too, belong to the malcontents, old soldier?" asked the Elector. "Are you, too, grumbling over the ad-

vent of a new era and lamenting the glorious past? Yes, so it is with you old people. You fancy that things only went on right in your day. Can you imagine that those who come after you will not renew and improve? But I tell you, old friend, a great deal must be altered, and as out of my old, tumble-down castle I mean to construct a stately palace, so out of the old crumbling Electorate of Brandenburg shall come forth a new, vigorous, and powerful state. To that end we must introduce new forms and use increased activity, while many an old thing must be thrown overboard."

"But the question is whether the new ones substituted in their place are really better or more useful," cried Burgsdorf warmly. "Ah, most gracious sir! when I see them tearing down the dear old castle, with its gray walls, its gable ends, and turrets, I feel so melancholy. It seems as if they were violently breaking down and casting away all my pleasant memories. I look at all the little windows, their small panes set in lead, and think of the many happy hours I have spent with your blessed father in the rooms behind them, and how brightly the sun seemed to shine in upon us through the tiny panes of glass. We never missed the great glass doors they use now, for he who has eyes to see sees just as well through our dear, old-fashioned windows. Many a time your honored father looked out and——"

"And saw a swamp before him," interrupted the Elector—"a swamp where hogs and street boys led a merry life, while respectable people waded through only at the risk of their lives. And you called that a pleasure garden, and deemed the prospect lovely when the pigstys were in front of the houses and cattle wallowed in the mire of the street. That I could not suffer, and out of the swamp have made veritable pleasure grounds and forbidden hogstys to be placed before the doors. This innovation raised a new lament over the good old times. Did not the citizens of Berlin and Cologne make a fearful outcry on being ordered to move their stables and stalls to the rear of their dwellings, although I furnished gratuitously materials for new ones in their yards? And when I ordered all the dirt to be carted out of the streets, that they might be thoroughly purified, and at my own ex-

pense had hundreds of wagonloads of filth carried out of Berlin to the pleasure grounds, was there not a hue and cry raised that the manure was the property of the city, and should have been thrown upon their fields rather than upon the Electoral lands? I laughed at this, and commiserated the poor, stupid people, who shrank from every novelty and preferred old filth to new cleanliness. But when men from whom we expect reason and reflection join in these howls and moans over the good old times, it is not very encouraging, and you, old friend, I should have suspected least of all of allying yourself with the malcontents."

"I can not help it, your highness," replied Burgsdorf doggedly. "I must grieve over the good old times, and it will just break my heart to see the old castle fall. Ah! in those days we used to be so free and sociable, so lively and gay. Ah! that was a merry life when we used to sit around the Electoral table telling good stories, with the great bumpers of wine before us, emitting such delightful fragrance. And did not we understand drinking, and did not the Elector know how to pledge us! I still think with pleasure of the day when I was to give his grace a proof of my capacity in that line, and before his eyes drank off eighteen quarts of wine without giving any sign of being intoxicated. The Elector laughed until he cried, and as a mark of his satisfaction presented me with a village the self-same day. Another time I must drink a quart of wine before him. I did so at one draught, without pausing to take breath, and then the Elector gave me Castle Damke for a reward." *

"So you owe your wealth to your drinking, my lord chamberlain!" cried the Electress indignantly. "Now I understand your complaints: you regret the times when castles and estates were awarded not to men of merit, but to immoderate drinkers!" †

Conrad von Burgsdorf ventured no reply, but a momentary pallor overspread his red bloated face, and mortal hatred flashed in the glance he cast upon the Electress's slender form.

* Historical. See King, Description of Berlin, vol. i, p. 237.

† The Elector's own words.

The Elector laughed. "Well," he said, laying his hand familiarly upon Burgsdorf's shoulder, "her grace gave you a right sharp answer, not undeserved either, I trow. You did contrive to wheedle my kind-hearted father too easily out of high honors and rich gifts. It was right pleasant for you, no doubt, to drink Electoral wine, and be rewarded into the bargain with manors and lands. But while you were being enriched, we became poor, and it imposed upon my father's successor the difficult duty of economy in place of a princely generosity. I must therefore sometimes submit to the stigma of meanness, being against my will oftentimes under the necessity of seeming so."

"Your highness," cried Burgsdorf passionately, "yours are bitter, cruel words, and my old heart writhes under them. True it is that the Elector George William was a most gracious and condescending lord, who treated his servants like friends, and loved to make them presents. Regarding his subjects as his children, he did not make their duties heavy, and imposed as few taxes upon them as possible, preferring to draw upon his own means rather than to burden the people. But I can not admit, as her grace the Electress remarked, that we, his faithful servants, deserved our manors and estates only for feats in drinking. No, your grace, we had won them by our trusty arms, often enough having imperiled our lives and shed our blood for our master. Full well the Elector knew that he could count upon our constancy and devotion in evil as well as in good report."

"And I know that too, Burgsdorf," said the Elector, smiling, "and therefore you should not allow yourself to become so heated. Both my wife and I fully appreciate your services, and could not do without you. As to your regrets over the gray old castle, cease to mourn, lord chamberlain; your memories need not fall at the same time, for I hope they are deeply rooted in your heart and will long be green. Lastly, old grumbler, I must warn you against being so unmannerly and sarcastic. One passage in your discourse was peculiarly displeasing to me, when you said that my father loved his subjects so much that he taxed them as little as possible. This was a mode of speech which you should never have presumed

to adopt, and to which I will only make this reply: He who taxes and takes from the poor classes who have nothing, and work for their daily bread, acts in a godless, cruel manner, and feeds upon his own vitals. For the laboring classes are the life blood of a sovereign, and he who overtasks them weakens himself. But to tax the rich landowners and noblemen, who in their luxurious mansions play the great lord and petty tyrants, to make such men realize that there is some one above them besides God, to bring them into subjection and make them feel that they must share the burdens as well as the benefits of government—to do this is wise, necessary, and reasonable, and to this course I shall steadfastly adhere. The mutterings and complainings of the great lords and nobility shall not cause me to swerve from my purpose. Lay this to heart, old man, and shape your course accordingly. And now go and shoot plenty of hares, and to-morrow give me an account of your sport."

He nodded kindly to Burgsdorf, who had listened to him with a moody, sullen air, and then turned to his wife. "Come, Electress, permit me to escort you back to your apartments, for I must repair to my cabinet and meet my councillors."

Louisa took his arm, and, without deigning to notice the lord chamberlain, allowed herself to be led away by her husband.

V.—The Lady from a Foreign Land.

Burgsdorf looked after them, while ever redder grew his face and more wrathful his glance. Once he opened his lips, for the utterance of a threat or imprecation, but quickly closed them again, muttering, in low tones, "Not here, no, not here!" Then, with unusual swiftness, he crossed the pleasure grounds and castle square and entered his own house. To the lackey who advanced to meet him he administered a sound box on the ear, called him an ass, threw his gold-laced hat at his head, and then strode upstairs. Going along the passage, he had the inexpressible satisfaction of finding an-

other lackey before his cabinet door, to whom he could likewise administer a box on the ear, because he had dared to come in his way; then he entered his sitting room. Here he was alone, here he could give vent to his spleen without fear of being overheard by any one, for well he knew that the two slaps just given would be the signal for the whole body of domestics to congregate in the most remote apartments of the house. He was therefore alone, and could curse and swear to his heart's content.

"I knew and felt it from the beginning," he said, snarling like a chained bloodhound. "This woman will ruin us all. I knew she would cool his regard for me by her overweening influence. I am nothing now, nothing at all! He will not even follow the chase against her wishes, although it used to be his highest delight and strongest passion. There is no longer any drinking, and we are as tame and subdued at table as if we were minstrels, whose only duty it was to strike the lute and sound our mistress's praises. It is a tiresome life this life of ours, and I shall not endure it longer. I should not wonder at all if we were all summoned to Boetzow to learn to milk and churn, the Elector at our head, for he will be milking a cow next, as he has learned to plant cabbage to-day. Yes, the time has indeed gone by for me to obtain anything. *She* gets everything. There is Boetzow, on which I had set my eye, handed over to her for the carrying out of her milkmaid whims, while I must stand by and bite my fingers."

Hotter and hotter waxed his fury, until he had vowed to wreak his vengeance against her whom his soul hated in the way most certain to destroy a loving woman's happiness. He would work upon the Elector's jealousy, and thus taste the sweet morsel of revenge.

Suddenly a loud knock at the door interrupted him in his by no means amiable soliloquy, and his gray eyes turned in the direction of the door. The knocking was repeated. "I will beat the fellow that dares to knock into a jelly," muttered the high chancellor, "and he shall remember it all the days of his life."

"Who is there?" he asked aloud.

"I, gracious sir!" squeaked a fine voice through the keyhole. "I only want to tell your grace that somebody is here who asks to speak with your excellency."

"The fellow disguises his voice," murmured the lord high chancellor; "he knows what he has to expect, and therefore would not have me recognize him. Come in!" he called, in gentle, pleasant tones—"come in and deliver your message!"

But the lackey knew his master's habits too well to accept the friendly invitation. "A strange lady is here!" he piped through the keyhole.

"A lady!" growled Burgsdorf. "I am just in the mood to talk with a lady. What sort of a lady? Come in and tell me!" he cried aloud, while he stepped on tiptoe to the door.

"It is a lady who will not tell her name!" was sung through the keyhole; "but she says she must see the lord high chamberlain himself directly——"

Burgsdorf had now gained the door, tore it open, and stretched out his hand to seize the venturous lackey; but the latter seemed to have been prepared for this as well, for, with surprising leaps, he bounded through the antechamber and rushed out into the passage. Despite his clumsiness, Burgsdorf followed in hot pursuit, resembling a bombshell on the point of bursting. Like a hunted deer the lackey flew to the staircase, and descended three steps at a time. After him came the lord high chamberlain, cursing and threatening. He had already reached the stairs, when suddenly, as if struck by lightning, he paused in mid career, and gazed upon the tall erect form of a lady who appeared upon the landing. She was enveloped in a black mantle with sweeping train, and a little hat worn jauntily to one side of her head revealed a profusion of brown tresses. A black veil fell down over her face, but through this sparkled her large lustrous eyes, like stars. As soon as she caught sight of the high chamberlain she raised her little gloved hand, and with ineffable grace drew back her veil.

The high chamberlain uttered a low "Ah!" of admiration at the sight of this dazzlingly beautiful face. The involuntary flattery of this exclamation elicited a smile upon the lady's pouting cherry lips.

"Are you the High Chamberlain von Burgsdorf?" she asked in fluent German, with only a slightly foreign accent.

"Yes," faltered forth Burgsdorf, still panting for breath from the violence of his chase.

"Call your lackeys to unstrap my trunks," she said, in a tone of command. "Be quick, my lord, be quick!"

The high chamberlain seemed actually enchanted by this mysterious beauty, for he had not the courage to resist her assumption of authority, but raised his voice and called the servants. "Christian, Fritz, here, you rascals! Hurry!"

They came running forward, and as soon as the lady descried them with outspread arms she flew up the steps and at the high chamberlain.

"My dear, dear father!" she exclaimed, flinging her arms around his neck. As she did so she whispered softly in his ear: "Return my embrace. Call me your daughter."

He was like an automaton, forced to do the enchantress's will. He threw his arms around her neck and said, "Welcome, daughter, you are heartily welcome!"

"You bid me welcome, then!" she cried joyfully. "You will permit your daughter, who has just returned from Paris, to spend a few days with you? Say 'Yes,'" she whispered, "for Heaven's sake say 'Yes.' Order your servants to carry my trunks to your guest chamber!"

"Yes," called out Burgsdorf. "I shall be overjoyed to have you with me a few days, my daughter.—Ho, you fellows! do not stand there gaping, but run down and bring up Madame von Kanitz's trunks. Carry them to the best spare room, and tell the housekeeper to put everything in nice order, for my dear daughter, Madame von Kanitz, is to pass some days with me."

The servants flew downstairs, and the high chamberlain was left alone with his problematical daughter.

"Give me the assistance of your arm and lead me into your drawing room," she said, in her proud, imperious voice.

Automatonlike he still obeyed, offered the lady his arm, walked obediently down the passage to the drawing room, threw open the door, and by a silent wave of the hand motioned her to enter.

Her wide silk skirts rustled as she swept past him and entered the room, bidding the high chamberlain close the door, and taking a rapid survey of the apartment with her large flashing eyes.

"Are we alone?" she asked. "Could anybody overhear us?"

She fixed her queenly glance upon the high chamberlain, and suddenly broke forth into a loud, silvery laugh.

"Confess, my dear father, that you have not yet recovered from the surprise of so sudden and unexpected a meeting with your beloved daughter?"

"Yes, I am indeed a little astonished, and——"

"You would like to know," interrupted the lady, "how it happens that the fair young widow, Madame von Kanitz, who just went to Paris a few weeks since, to be diverted a little from her grief, should have returned so speedily?"

"No such thing," quickly returned Burgsdorf. "I do not trouble myself in the least about my daughter; I have nothing to do with her, and knew nothing of her going to Paris as a gay widow."

Again the lady burst out into a merry laugh.

"You please me uncommonly," she cried, "and you are exactly what your daughter pictured you to be. Oh, I am certain we shall become good friends, and soon understand one another."

"I desire nothing better," said Burgsdorf hastily. "I beg, therefore, that you will tell me how that end may be effected."

"Patience, patience, my dear lord chamberlain," replied the lady, with a smile, which displayed two rows of most exquisite teeth. "Explanations come not so quickly, sir. First help me to take off my hat and mantle, for it behooves a daughter to make herself at home in her father's house."

Courteously he lent his aid in relieving her of her cloak, and with a bow took the little hat from her hand.

"Now look at me," she said, with dignity. "Look at me right closely, and then say whether you recognize me."

Burgsdorf obeyed and scanned her narrowly. His eyes seemed to find a peculiar satisfaction in their task, for they

brightened and plainly expressed the joyful admiration which filled him at the sight of that slender, graceful form, the rosy countenance, with its burning black eyes, the smiling red lips, and the high, white forehead, encircled by dark hair that covered her head with a profusion of little ringlets. Only one thing detracted from his enjoyment in the contemplation of these ravishing charms: that was the tightly fitting robe of black silk she wore, with a stiff white ruff high in the throat, which Burgsdorf remembered as the uniform of nuns in French convents. The hair, which she had arranged in such charming ringlets above her brow and on both sides of the temples, was covered behind by a black cap, which seemed much more suitable for a matron or nun than for the head of this fascinating woman of the world.

"Well, you have examined me quite narrowly," said the lady after a short pause; "now tell me whether or not you know me."

"I am sorry that I must answer no," replied Burgsdorf, with a bow.

"I am then greatly altered," sighed she, "I have grown old. 'Tis true, many years have passed since you last saw me."

"Did I ever see your grace?" asked Burgsdorf, astounded.

"Yes, my lord chamberlain, here at Berlin where we found an asylum in our flight from Prague, and rested under our uncle's roof, before we repaired to The Hague. Yes, you saw me, and not merely as a child, either, for you dared to kiss my hand and—— I will now permit you to do the same."

She drew off her glove and offered him her little hand, sparkling with diamond rings. He pressed it to his lips, but as he did so his cunning gray eyes were fixed upon the massive signet ring which she wore upon the middle finger. The coat of arms was engraved upon an immense ruby. He could not, indeed, prolong the kiss so as to distinguish the armorial bearings, but he had seen the prince's crown surmounting them, and therefore was at least certain that he had to do with a lady of exalted rank.

"And now, my lord chamberlain," said the lady, lightly crossing the room and, with freedom from all restraint, en-

sconcing herself in the only cushioned armchair in the room, "our explanations will begin. Take a chair, for I allow you to sit down."

She said this with such an air of sovereignty that Burgsdorf actually received as a favor her permission to sit in her presence.

"My lord chamberlain," she said, "for the present it matters not who I am; you will learn that soon enough. It is sufficient for you to know my wishes, and, that you may not be a moment longer in doubt about me, I shall hand you a note from the French ambassador to this court, Count de Chanut, who at this time, as you well know, is not here but in France."

She took from her pocket a sealed packet and handed it to the high chamberlain, holding it with the tips of her rosy fingers.

"Will your grace permit me to read it in your presence?" asked Burgsdorf, breaking the seal.

"Do so, and, that we may both know what the dear count has written, you may read the note aloud to me."

Burgsdorf bowed gratefully, as if the lady had actually granted him a favor, and then began to read:

"My Lord High Chamberlain von Burgsdorf:

"I take the liberty of making a request of you. Interest yourself warmly in the illustrious lady who will transmit these lines to you. Be her knight, her devoted champion, and first of all contrive to procure her an early interview with his Highness the Elector. I know that we can count upon you, and number you among the friends of France. His Majesty King Louis knows this also, and has it at heart to present you with a testimony of his gratitude and contentment. If through your mediation the illustrious lady shall succeed, not only in obtaining one interview with the Elector but many, that she may acquire influence over his decisions, then his Majesty the King of France will pay a subsidy to you as he does already to most of the German princes, and so long as you remain a true friend to France you may expect to receive an annual income of ten thousand louis d'or. The il-

lustrious lady will have the kindness to hand you the first installment of your salary immediately after her first interview with the Elector.

"Your devoted friend,

"CHANUT."

"Well," asked the lady, when he had read to the end, "how do you like the letter?"

"Most gracious lady, I——"

"Highness is my title," she interrupted.

"Most gracious highness, I am charmed with it, only——"

"Only you would like to know what it is all about. Console yourself. I have not come to make a murderous attempt upon your Elector. Oh, no; on the contrary, I would seek to win him for myself—that is to say, for France. In these words is explained the whole object of my mission here. It is known at Paris that the Emperor of Germany is using every exertion to persuade the Elector to forsake his neutrality, and declare himself an imperial partisan, to take the field against the Prince of Condé in conjunction with the Duke of Lorraine, who is battling on the Rhine for his so-called patrimony. The Elector's journey to Prague has given rise to much anxiety, for it has been determined to try to bring the Elector over to the interests of France."

"Alas! that will be attended with great difficulty," sighed Burgsdorf. "The Electress's influence over her husband increases daily, and as she is one of France's most decided opponents, and a warm Imperialist, she will naturally succeed in converting the Elector to her way of thinking. Now, if there were any one who could counteract and undermine the influence of the Electress, the case would be different, and there might be hope of gaining him for France."

"Ah! Chanut's report must be correct then," exclaimed the lady joyfully. "The Elector is manageable. Hark! I shall be candid with you, and expect you to be the same with me. They wrote to Count Chanut from Paris for a description of Elector Frederick William's character. Hear his answer. Oh! I can repeat it word for word, because I learned it by heart, that I might make use of it as a guide for my own con-

duct. Listen then: 'I regard the Elector of Brandenburg as a prince of great judgment and good sense. But he has the failing of his family, being too easily subject to control, and as he has not been fortunate enough always to find competent men on whom to impose the burden of his great affairs, they have fallen into entanglement. He is also subjected to great embarrassment from pecuniary difficulties. Hitherto the Lord High Chamberlain Burgsdorf exerted the greatest influence over him; but he has recently been superseded by Princess Amelia of Orange, and his young wife also begins to make her influence felt.' * So says Chanut, and I would learn of you whether his words embody truth."

"Yes, your highness, the pure, unadulterated truth. I must admit that my star is on the wane, and the Electress, thanks to her crafty mother's counsels, seems daily to be acquiring more complete ascendency over her husband. If she gains her point, the Elector will soon rank among the enemies of France, and take the field with the Emperor of Germany in behalf of Lorraine."

"But she shall not gain her point!" cried the lady emphatically. "For that very reason have I come. I shall break the young Electress's power, and free the Elector from this ruinous petticoat government. I shall put in play every expedient of art and persuasion to win him to the side of France, and extricate him from the snares of the Emperor of Germany."

"If you succeed, your highness, you will make me your most humble and devoted slave!" cried Burgsdorf. "Oh, I beseech you, who understand the arts of enchantment, so to enchant my beloved master that he may return to me and memories of old times. I love him so much that if the young Electress's influence should deprive me of his confidence and friendship, I would die of grief and rage."

"You shall not die," cried the lady, "for I am here, and together we will conclude a league offensive and defensive. Shall we not?"

"Most gracious highness," cried Burgsdorf, "I am ready

* Chanut's own words. See Droysen, History of Prussia, vol. iii, part 2, p. 61.

to become your servant, your slave. I swear to yield implicit obedience to all your orders, and to support all your plans. On my knees——"

"For Heaven's sake, do not kneel," interrupted the lady, detaining Burgsdorf, who was about to fall on his knees. "Consider, dear old man, that you resemble Falstaff, and, like Sir John, would have to cry out, 'Have you any levers to lift me up again, being down?' No, stand up. I believe your protestations, for one consideration gives security for your good faith; verily, an annuity of ten thousand louis d'or *is* a consideration, and I am sure you will use all diligence to assure yourself of its possession. It is settled, then, we are friends and allies. We unite for France against the Electress and the Emperor of Germany."

"Yes, we unite upon that!" cried Burgsdorf enthusiastically, at the same time pressing the lady's proffered hand to his lips.

"Will you procure me a secret interview with the Elector?"

"I shall procure it, your highness. I know not yet how it will be possible, but it shall be made possible."

"And this interview must take place to-morrow. Hush! no remonstrances. Remember, you shall then draw the first quarter of your salary to-morrow."

"This interview will take place to-morrow," said Burgsdorf, bowing profoundly.

"Good! We can arrange all the rest at breakfast, and I shall then give you an explanation of all that concerns myself. I allow you now to hand your daughter in to breakfast, and hope you will be good enough always to address me as your daughter before the members of your household, and not for one instant to forget your part as father. At Mentz I dismissed my French servants, and in Frankfort, as Madame von Kanitz, hired a German valet and maid. You see that my secret is well guarded, and that no one can fathom it. Your daughter herself told me that her person was unknown to your servants, as she had never entered her father's house; and, as an additional safeguard, Madame von Kanitz wrote to her mother

that she was about to visit Berlin, because she longed to be reconciled with her dear father."

"The old termagant will be delighted at this," laughed Burgsdorf; "she will doubtless take to her bed on the occasion and drink camomile tea."

The lady echoed his laughed. "Come, *très cher père*," said she, "take me into the dining room, for I feel my human weakness: I am hungry!"

VI.—The Skeleton.

The day after the Elector's return an unusual stir and bustle prevailed on the castle square, and more especially around the castle itself; carpenters and masons, joiners and bricklayers displayed unwonted activity. To and fro moved the master builder Memmhart with contented face, sometimes on that side of the castle where the masons were busied upon the new building, sometimes on the other, where they were about to tear down an old ruined wing of the castle, to make way for a loftier and handsomer erection. This wing fronted upon the cathedral square, and here was to be reared the long magnificent façade of the new castle, already planned by the master builder's inventive brain.

Many laborers were employed upon the building to-day, and as they worked they laughed, jested, and sang merry songs, and the passers-by paused to watch the masons clambering up and down upon the roof, taking off stones and handing them along. It was delightful to see the regularity with which the work went on, and to follow the stones as they passed from hand to hand, until from the top of the roof they finally reached the ground, where they were carefully piled up. Gradually the throng of lookers-on in the square multiplied, and they told one another that as soon as the roof was removed, and the carpenters had taken away the rafters, a company of soldiers with battering rams would come to knock down the old walls. As on the day before, shoemaker Wendt and tailor

Fürberg were among the gaping crowd, and soon a circle of acquaintances collected around them, for these two mechanics had the reputation, among their fellows, of being wise men, who did not allow themselves to be imposed upon by Electoral pomp and glory, but criticised their Elector's proceedings with unsparing severity, and sat in judgment upon the Government.

"Have you heard, Master Fürberg, that the Elector is on the point of imposing a new tax?" asked one of his near neighbors of the tailor, who had the credit of being a sharp politician.

"Yes, indeed, I have heard it," replied the tailor, putting on an air of importance and raising his eyebrows. "The Elector wants to enlarge his military establishment. That will, of course, require a great deal of money, and who is to pay it? *We*, to be sure—*we*, the burghers, artisans, and peasants. It seems that we are only put into the world to pay imposts and taxes, that our Elector may maintain a large military force. It is true, we have neither money nor work, for if we had work we would not be standing here idle in the street. Now, if we have no work, it follows that we can have no money."

"Very true, very just," sounded from the ever-increasing circle of listeners. "We have no work and no money; how then are we to pay taxes?"

"Out of your poverty," hissed the tailor. "To be sure, you can hire yourselves out by the day to work upon the castle. Herr Memmhart would doubtless condescend to receive you into the number of his hodcarriers, and pay you a few cents daily, and then, if you are right economical and content yourselves with dry bread and cold water, perhaps you may save enough of your wages to pay the new tax."

"It is a sin and a shame!" exclaimed shoemaker Wendt. "No work, no profits, and yet forever called upon to pay taxes. What are we coming to?"

"Beggary and starvation!" shouted Ewald, the cobbler. "If we were beggars, we would not be taxed. Claus is the wisest among us; he does not work nor disturb himself about giving tribute, and yet he lives, and, as you saw yesterday, he is a very distinguished man, especially favored by the Elector.

For you saw yourselves how long he talked with him, and how vexed he was at his having fallen for a little while into our power. The Elector even sent his own physician to visit and prescribe for the beggar Claus."

"But it was not at all necessary," screeched Kurt, the leech. "When the doctor got there, the devil had been beforehand with him."

"What?" interrupted another townsman. "Did the devil carry Claus off? Friends, hear the news. Claus is dead."

"Claus is dead! The devil has carried off the beggar Claus!" sounded from mouth to mouth.

"No!" screamed the leech, "I said no such thing. I only said that the devil had paid him a visit. If you will attend, I will tell you the whole story, and prove to you that, just as I have always said, Claus is a conjurer and wizard. Will you listen to me?"

"Hear! hear!" resounded from all directions. "Go on, Master Kurt, go on!"

"Well, you saw the fellow's condition yesterday. He could not move at all, so that the High Chamberlain Burgsdorf had to call four soldiers to carry him on a litter to his den. You know where he lives, in that old dilapidated house behind the orangery, where the Electoral gardener used to live. He managed to find a room there whose walls were sound, and where the roof did not leak, and the Elector himself gave him leave to take up his quarters there. Thither the soldiers carried Claus, and I followed, for I thought the fellow might have to be bled or leeched, and, as it was to be done at the Elector's expense, I could afford to stand by the beggar in his distress. I had some curiosity, too, to see his room. So they set him down before his lodging place, but what do you think? The beggar Claus has a lock upon his door."

"The beggar Claus has a lock upon his door!" was echoed in astonishment from all sides.

"Yes, only think," continued the leech, "he can fasten his door so that nobody can get in! When we found that the door was made fast, the soldiers and I were deliberating as to what was to be done, when all at once Claus, who had hitherto lain like a dead man, raised himself, looked around,

and asked where he was. When we asked him how we were to open the door, he slid down from the litter, stationed himself before the door, and said: 'I feel better already, and would rather go into my own room alone. I thank you for bringing me here, but go away now, and take no more trouble on my account.'"

"And you did so?" asked many voices. "You went away?"

"Yes," cried the leech, with a cunning twinkle in his eyes, "we did go away, but I—felt so sorry for the poor fellow that I had to turn back to see how he was getting on. I cautiously crept up and peeped through the chinks in the front door, opening upon the little entry, where we had left Claus. What did I see? I saw Claus with trembling hands take out one of the red flagstones with which the entry is paved, and draw forth a key. I saw him creep up to the door with the key, unlock it, and then go in like a cat, on all fours. Hardly had he gotten in and I recovered a little from my astonishment, when I went up to the door and attempted to gain admittance. But, heaven and earth! he had bolted it from the inside, and I was forced to withdraw disappointed. But happily it occurred to me that the Elector had given orders that a doctor should attend the sick man. Ah, thought I, the doctor will soon come; I shall wait for him. I stayed in the neighborhood, walking up and down, but the doctor did not hurry himself, for it was almost night before he came, accompanied by one of the soldiers who had helped to carry Claus on the litter. I rushed up to the door, beating and hammering upon it: 'Open, Claus, open! it is I, Kurt, the leech!' But all was still. The doctor began to be impatient at the delay, and, stepping up to the door himself, rapped upon it with his gold-headed cane, and called out, 'Open! in the Elector's name, open!' Hardly had he spoken before the door was unbolted, and Claus appeared upon the threshold."

"On all fours?" asked tailor Fürberg, while the multitude stared at the narrator in breathless silence, hanging upon every word that fell from his lips.

"No," gravely replied the leech; "the beggar Claus now stood upright, and looked quite well again, only a little paler

than usual. The doctor said that his Highness the Elector had been pleased to send him to set a broken leg for the beggar Claus, and he was surprised to find him apparently well and without broken bones. Claus replied that it was so; his ankle had been merely dislocated, that he had set it himself, and was in no need of medical attendance. The doctor growled out that he need not have been troubled to leave his house for the sake of such a fellow, turned on his heel, and walked off. But I sprang forward, and telling Claus that I only wanted to see how he was getting along, tried to push through the door into the room. But Claus pushed me back with great force, and, shaking his fist in my face, screamed out: 'You would again drive the devil out of me? Come on, then! Let us see whether you are the fellow to do it!' But as he shook his fist in my face, I seemed to see blue sparks flying, and such a smell of sulphur came from his room that it took my breath away and made my eyes water. Then I cried aloud for horror, prayed a paternoster, and ran off as fast as my legs would carry me."

"That is not true!" cried a loud, deep voice. "You said no paternoster, but cursed and swore in most ungodly style."

"The beggar Claus! The wizard! The conjurer!" shrieked the crowd, drawing back and leaving a broad passage free, in the midst of which the beggar Claus found himself quite alone. He stood leaning upon his staff, and his glance swept over the multitude, who were looking at him with fear and horror.

"Well, what is the matter?" he asked, in a loud, steady voice. "Why do you glare at me as if the devil were actually here in bodily presence? You stupid people! the devil has no need to appear visibly; he is within you all; you are dear children of his now, and will hereafter become his imps in hell."

"Just hear! Claus actually dares to insult and vilify honorable citizens like ourselves!" yelled Ewald, the cobbler. "He calls us imps of hell!"

"He is one himself! A sorcerer!" cried shoemaker Wendt. "Otherwise, how could he possibly be well to-day after such a beating as we gave him yesterday? Any Christian man would have been laid up for four weeks."

"Yes!" screamed another, "he is a wizard! He knows everything. I had lost my hammer, and could find it nowhere after looking for it three whole days. I accidentally met Claus, who stopped before me and said: 'You are looking for your hammer, master locksmith. Go to the Willow-bank Gate; you will find it on the bridge.' I went, and, as sure as I am living, there lay my hammer."

"Yes, yes, he is a wizard and knows everything," growled another. "I lost some yarn that I had just bought at Köpnik fair. Says my wife, 'Go and ask the beggar Claus where it is, for he knows everything.' Sure enough, I found it in the very spot he said, and took it home. But the marks of the devil's fingers were upon it. The yarn was bewitched; the threads broke so that no cloth could be spun out of it."

"He bewitched it!" screamed the chorus of bystanders; "he singed it with the touch of his fiery fingers! He gave the yarn back to you because he wanted to gain your soul. You could never weave anything but a shroud out of it, for it is unlucky yarn, and you ought not to have taken it!"

"No, no, never take anything from the devil, if you would not belong to him. And Claus is as good as the devil, for he is a wizard and conjurer, and——"

A fearful crash, a thundering noise was heard, an immense cloud of dust settled over the entire square, enveloping everything as it were in a dark mantle. The people answered this unexpected and terrific roar with one shriek of dismay, then from the midst of the gray mist a quivering female voice called out, "Let us fall on our knees and pray!" and a hundred voices responded, "Yes, let us pray!" All dropped upon their knees, and no sound was heard on the square but the low murmuring of prayers, mingled with the sobs and groans of terrified women pleading with their God for mercy. Gradually, however, the cloud dispersed, revealing the people still upon their knees and the beggar, who alone had not bowed in prayer, standing erect in the open space in their midst, leaning upon his staff and casting derisive glances on all around. The people looked at each other in amazement, and from all sides came the question: "What was that? Did God

speak to us in his thunder? Did he mean to tell us that we should no longer suffer this conjurer among us?"

"See, you simpletons!" cried Claus, raising his arm and pointing to the castle with his staff. "The old castle wall has tumbled down."

And without deigning to notice further the gaping, bewildered crowd, supported upon his staff, Claus hobbled across the square to the heap of rubbish, which was now all that was left of the old wing of the castle. The inquisitive mob greeted with laughter and jests this simple and natural explanation of the terrific event, and, rushing after the beggar, ran past him in its hurry to reach the ruins, about which Memmhart and his workmen were employed. The old wall, which they had intended to remove little by little, had suddenly fallen as soon as its supports had been removed, laying bare a few old apartments which had been long disused and prepared for this catastrophe. The populace, which had never beheld more of the Electoral castle than its exterior, eagerly gazed in upon the tapestried chambers, which looked ghostly out of the dilapidated and broken walls.

All at once a voice cried out: "Just look up there! Do you see that white figure in the thick wall?"

"Yes, yes," replied many voices—"yes, yes, we see it. There, where there is a projection in the wall. It looks out from between the stones. Yes, it is a tall white shape!"

"The White Lady! It is the White Lady!" murmured the multitude. "Only see how the specter stands there in the gray wall! It is the White Lady! the White Lady!"

Seized with horror, the crowd gazed upward, and every face grew pale. Meanwhile the master builder had also seen this strange form ensconced among the stones, and, pointing it out to his workmen, consulted with them as to the possibility of reaching the spot. They might have entered the chamber from the other side through the castle, but the flooring had given way in part, and only single rafters retained their position, still held firm by the iron braces which were fixed in the walls yet standing. The safest and least dangerous course, then, would be to rest a long ladder against the outside wall and to ascend to the spot. But there was danger that

the tottering wall should break again under the weight of the ladder and the man who climbed it. However, a keen curiosity to know the meaning of this singular occurrence emboldened one of the masons to volunteer his services for the perilous undertaking. The ladder was procured and cautiously propped against the crumbling wall, so that the upper end just touched the niche where the strange shape was seen.

"See, see, he is going up!" murmured voices among the crowd, which kept pushing onward, ever closer, ever nearer the ladder. All eyes were fixed upon the venturous man who was now clambering up the ladder as nimbly as a cat; all other feelings, all hatred, all malice were momentarily hushed in the breasts of those present. Little heeded they now that the beggar Claus stood close before them—almost in contact with them. All was forgot but the movements of the daring artisan. Now he had reached the top of the ladder, and could see whether this white figure was a reality or only an illusion.

Breathless silence reigned on the square. It was broken by the stentorian voice of the mason, calling down: "It is a skeleton! A human skeleton in white clothes!" *

A shudder thrilled the hearts of all present.

"A human skeleton in white clothes!" whispered their trembling lips; "it is the White Lady! Woe to us all! It is the White Lady! She foretells misery and death for us all!"

Again was heard the voice of the man upon the ladder.

"I shall let down the rope!" he cried. "Fasten a basket to it, that I may pack the skeleton in it and send it down."

With dexterity he drew from his breast pocket a strong rope, which he had doubtless carried up with that design, and, fastening it to a round of the ladder, let it roll down. Below a mason stood ready to seize the end, a third mason rushed forward with a basket, which was attached to the rope.

"Ready!" they shouted up to the mason at the top of the ladder, and he quickly drew the basket up, all eyes following it with intense interest.

"Take care!" screamed up the master builder. "Try

* The discovery of the skeleton upon the demolishing of the old castle walls is historical, and the people maintained that it was the skeleton of the White Lady. See von Ledebur, Archives of Prussian History.

not to injure the figure, but get it whole into the basket. Get out of the way," he said, turning to the beggar, who had stepped close up to the ladder. "Move back, Claus, for if anything were to fall from above, it would hit you."

But Claus heard not the master builder's warning. He had urged his way to the very foot of the ladder, and stood there breathless, gazing upward as if spellbound. The mason had pulled up the basket, and, holding it firmly with his left hand, grasped the white figure with his right. It seemed to be quite firmly imbedded in the wall, for he could not immediately draw it forth. He had first to break away a few stones, throwing them into the open chamber. So still were the spectators in the square that the hollow noise made by the rolling of the stones across the floor was distinctly heard. Then he thrust his arm into the niche and triumphantly lifted up a round white object.

"It is a skull!" whispered the men to one another. "Only see, he is putting it into the basket! Hush, hush! Do not talk! Let us look! Look!"

Again the workman inserted his arm into the niche. It came forth again with a long white object, which, caught by a puff of wind, fluttered like a sail in the breeze.

"The shroud! the shroud!" screeched female voices here and there. Then all was again silent. They saw the man cautiously endeavoring to put into the basket the white garment, which evidently covered a part of the skeleton. Now a shriek of horror sounded from all lips. They had plainly seen a long white bone slip from the garment and fall. Terror-stricken, all started back.

A second shriek resounded. It was the beggar Claus who uttered it. The lower part of the arm, to which the hand still hung, had struck his forehead so severe a blow that the blood gushed from the wound in streams.

"Claus is wounded!" was shrieked and howled by the mob. "The arm of the skeleton has fallen and struck him! It is the vengeance of God! Even the dead rise up in judgment against the wizard and sorcerer, and stamp his forehead with the mark of Cain!"

Smitten with terror and dismay, all shrank from the beg-

gar, who with bleeding brow had sunk down beside the ladder. Occupied with this new event, the people had even forgotten to observe the further movements of the mechanic above. He had meanwhile finished collecting the bones, and cried down: "Look out! I am going to leave the basket!"

This cry again diverted the attention of the spectators, and all eyes once more turned upon the workman. They saw him lift the basket off the ladder round and launch it into the air. They saw how, carefully holding the rope with both hands, he let it glide slowly through his fingers, and how the basket gradually descended, laden with its ghastly contents.

At the foot of the ladder stood Herr Memmhart with two workmen, ready to receive the basket, and to hold the ladder during the man's descent. At the side of the ladder, a little in the rear, and again entirely unobserved, cowered the beggar on the ground. Nobody saw the expression of agony, the breathless suspense written upon his pale features—nobody heard his low whisper of "God, my God! have mercy upon me, and let me not go mad before I know what this skeleton signifies, whether——"

Just at this moment the workmen caught hold of the now rapidly descending basket, and the master builder looked in. "A skeleton," he said—"a human skeleton, and that of a woman, too, it seems. For just see, this garment has not the cut of a shroud; it looks like a woman's dress, and not as if it were meant for a corpse, but for a living person. And here is the veil—only see this white veil! It is in quite good preservation, and what fine lace it is trimmed with!"

He cautiously pulled out a long strip of muslin, bordered with that heavy Venetian lace known as guipure.

"Hold it up higher, Herr Memmhart!" begged the multitude. "Let us see what you have in your hand!"

The master builder held the veil aloft with both hands, and the wind, playing with its ends, carried it yet higher. As they drooped again, one edge grazed the beggar's hand, and was tinged with the blood which flowed from his wound. He caught at the veil and stared at it, as if he saw inscribed upon it mysterious, awful characters. Then, rushing toward the

basket, he sank down beside it and strove to grasp its contents with his hands.

Herr Memmhart thrust him back. "Let those things alone, Claus. They are nothing to you, for the dead can give no alms."

"He says that it is nothing to me," murmured Claus, who still knelt beside the basket, devouring it with his eyes. "Could I only see the dress, the dress! But they have covered the basket with a cloth, and I can see nothing more, nothing at all!"

Meanwhile the workman had descended the ladder. The master builder stepped up and offered him his hand.

"Well, Louis, I congratulate you on coming down in safety. If the wall had given way, you might have tumbled down and broken your neck."

"I knew very well that the wall was not going to give way," said the mason, laughing. "The skeleton would not have suffered it, master. The skeleton held the wall firm, and would not let it cave in, for it meant that its secret should be told. It had its murderer to accuse!"

"You think, then, that this is the skeleton of a murdered person, Louis?"

"Yes, sir, I think so. Why should anybody have immured this woman in a wall, instead of giving her Christian burial. Without doubt, there has been murder here, and you shall see that it will come to light, and that the victim will demand justice. I have two important things here. In the first place, examine this gold ring. It was on the forefinger of the right hand, which fortunately did not fall until I had gained possession of the ring. And here is a little handkerchief which was around the neck. It was tied so tightly that I was forced to conclude that with it this person had been strangled. See, here it is, sir. I left it just as I found it lying under the skull."

He handed to the master builder a white silk handkerchief, looped and tied in a hard knot.

"This certainly seems to have been used for a collar, and the neck which fitted it had evidently no room allowed for breathing. But observe! here in this corner is some embroidery! Here are letters prettily entwined together."

"It is a name, sir," said the mason. "I believe there is a name in the ring, too."

Memmhart took the ring out of his vest pocket, and examined it inside. "Yes, indeed," he said, "here are characters—here is a name. But it does not seem to be the same as the one on the handkerchief. Ah! now I see it clearly; the name is 'Gabriel.'"

"Gabriel!" shrieked beggar Claus, jumping up—"Gabriel! She has called me—she has pronounced my name!"

Memmhart did not hear him, being wholly absorbed in his endeavors to decipher the name on the handkerchief. "Now I have it," he said joyfully. "This first ornamented letter is an R, then, yes, then comes an E. The third letter is a B, it seems, and then another E and——"

"Rebecca!" screamed a voice behind him, and a quick, strong hand snatched the handkerchief from him. "Rebecca! my Rebecca!" repeated the voice.

"What is the matter with you, Claus?" cried the master builder angrily. "How dare you snatch that handkerchief from me? Give it back to me this instant!"

"No!" shouted Claus, as if in an ecstasy of joy—"no, I will not give it up! It is mine, for it belonged to Rebecca. I gave it to her; it was my first present. Give me my ring—my own ring! I will have it again, for it comes from her. She sends me her engagement ring as a token that my time of probation has expired; she calls me to herself with the hallowed pledge of our love. Give me my ring, sir. I must have it!"

"What ring?" asked Memmhart. "Are you mad, Claus? What ails you?"

"It is my ring! my ring!" screamed the beggar, trembling with excitement. With glowing cheeks and flashing eyes he laid both hands on the master builder's shoulders.

"Let me go, Claus, or I shall call the police and beadle, and have you put in jail."

"See, just see," cried the people. "The beggar is actually laying hands on the master builder. He will murder him! Call the police! the police!"

A few of the multitude officiously undertook the errand, and hurried off.

"My ring! my ring!" shrieked Claus, and, perceiving that the master builder clinched one hand as if to hide something, he seized it with superhuman strength, and forcibly possessed himself of the ring.

"I have the ring once more! my engagement ring!" he cried exultingly, slipping it on his finger.

He again sprang toward the basket, knelt down beside it, convulsively tore off the cover, and drew forth the white garment from amid the frightful confusion of bones with which it was filled.

"It is her dress!" he shrieked. "She wore it on our wedding day. I recognize it. It was her bridal dress, and has also become her winding sheet!"

He bowed his head over the dress and pressed his lips to it, at the same time breaking forth in such a wail of woe as moved to compassion even the cold hearts of the bystanders. No one had the heart to tear the beggar away from that basket with its mournful contents, no one thought of interrupting the bitter lament which poured from his lips, but with suspended breath and tearful eyes all listened to the beggar, who, in his exaltation, seemed to have forgotten that he was not alone, but surrounded by men, watching him inquisitively, and listening to his speech with attentive ears.

"And so I have you again, my darling!" he said in soft, low tones, embracing the basket with both arms. "You have descended from your dreadful tomb to give me tidings of your death, to tell me the awful secret of your murder. Oh, my Rebecca! must this be the end of our love? Are these blanched bones, these decaying vestments, this telltale handkerchief all that I have left of you? Yes, they have killed you, my Rebecca, and with your noble life you have paid the price of your wretched husband's crime. I alone murdered you; I alone am to blame for your death. But I have done penance, Rebecca; I have endured fourteen years of pain and torture, and have not sunk beneath the load. I could not die before I had discovered your grave. Ah, my poor darling! They gave you a narrow, dreadful tomb, and your corpse withered to

a skeleton before I found it. You would not call me hence until my soul had been purified by passing through an earthly purgatory. But now the hour of grace has come, and you pity me. Look down from your height, my Rebecca; behold a poor, heart-broken creature groveling in the dust before you! See what crime and penitence have made of me! All the vanities, the pride, and the ambition of life have I cast from me. I have done penance in sackcloth and ashes; have become a beggar before God and man; have voluntarily called down upon myself the scorn and contempt of the world. I have trodden my heart under foot and bowed my head in humility. Oh, say now that you have compassion, that you summon me to meet you. Say that you will now pardon your murderer——"

A hand was laid heavily upon his shoulder, and a rough voice exclaimed, "Claus, I arrest you in the name of the Elector and the law!"

It was the beadle, who, in obedience to the people's call, had drawn near to the beggar and heard the last part of his lament.

The beggar started; the touch of this rough hand had recalled him to the world, and his spirit, which had been soaring above the clouds of this world, was rudely reminded of earthly things.

"What would you have of me?" he asked, bewildered, looking up dreamily at the man in scarlet coat who stood over him and glowered down upon him. "Why do you lay your hand upon me?"

"I lay my hand on you in the name of the law," said the man harshly. "The people say that you are a sorcerer, in league with the devil. You say yourself that you are a murderer. I arrest you, therefore, as a sorcerer and murderer, in the name of God and man!"

"As a sorcerer and murderer!" repeated the mob with a yell of rage and horror.

But these formidable words produced quite an opposite effect upon the beggar. He arose from his knees and lifted up his head; his countenance, hitherto pale as death, was brightened as with a ray of morning sunshine, and his eyes,

hitherto dimmed by tears, sparkled with joy as he lifted them to heaven with a glance full of reverent devotion.

"The ways of God are past finding out!" he cried, with outstretched arms. "I recognize thy voice, O Lord my God, speaking to me through that of the law. Through penance I shall attain eternal peace, through punishment the absolved sinner shall mount up to the abodes of the blessed! Rebecca, my Rebecca! you will receive me, you have stretched out your hand to me, and marked my forehead with the seal of blood! Yes, yes, my blood shall propitiate! I am ready, Rebecca, I am ready!"

"Enough now of talk and clamor!" cried the beadle. "Give here your hands that I may bind them, as is the custom with grave offenders, until chains are procured."

"Here they are!" cried Claus, joyfully extending his hands. "Bind them, chain them; I have deserved it all. For, you are right, I am a sorcerer! I am a murderer! Do with me as the law requires!"

"He confesses!" murmured the multitude. "He says himself that he is a sorcerer and a murderer!"

"In the name of justice and the laws of the cities of Berlin and Cologne, I arrest you!" exclaimed the beadle in a loud voice.

Thus saying, he bound the beggar's hands firmly behind his back and then grasped him by one arm, while one of his officials took hold of the other.

"Let us go!" cried Gabriel joyfully. "To prison! To death! To immortality! Come! come!"

Spiritedly he moved along between the beadle and his men. His face was radiant, his step light and elastic, and his eye turned heavenward glowed with the fire of inspiration.

The throng followed him with loud yells and wild imprecations, and lingered for hours before the Ochsenkopf, the prison without the gates, whither the criminal had been led.

VII.—The Elector and the Burgomaster.

Thoughtfully and sadly the Elector paced his cabinet. He had just received from Memmhart an exact and circumstantial account of the event which had transpired upon the castle square a few hours before. When Memmhart had told him that the beggar Claus had been arrested and thrown into prison, the Elector had uttered an exclamation of surprise, and bidden the master builder hurry and have the beggar forthwith released in his name.

"To whom shall I deliver your highness's order?" Memmhart had asked, and his question had seemed to set the Elector to thinking.

"Go to Burgomaster Wegelin, Memmhart," he had replied after a pause. "Tell him all the particulars of the matter. Say to him that I have long known the beggar as a quiet, harmless monomaniac, and I will go security for him myself. They must therefore let the poor madman go, and let him sit in his accustomed place near the castle. Or stay, better still: go to Burgomaster Wegelin and tell him to come to me directly, for I have something to say to him."

"And the skeleton?" Memmhart had asked. "What are your highness's commands with regard to the skeleton?"

The Elector had turned, and silently walked up and down. Then he had retired into a window recess, and, with his back to the master builder, had stood for a long while leaning his forehead against the glass panes.

"The bones must be immediately deposited in a coffin," he had said after a long pause, "and at nightfall they must, with all secrecy, be buried in a corner of the cathedral churchyard." *

Memmhart had departed, and the Elector now awaited with impatience the arrival of Burgomaster Wegelin.

"They are not to torment and abuse the poor man," he said to himself. "He has suffered enough already. No, no,

* "They actually buried the skeleton found in the castle wall in the cathedral graveyard, and the people supposed that the White Lady could no longer walk in the castle." (Von Ledebur.)

they shall not accuse him. Nothing but evil could come of it. For if there was a trial, Gabriel Nietzel would not keep silence, but in the end make confession before the whole world, including the crime into which he was beguiled by Schwarzenberg. A tedious lawsuit would ensue, which would finally involve the son, Count Adolphus von Schwarzenberg. This would give umbrage to the Emperor, for the count stands high in favor at the imperial court, and his Majesty has just raised the son of our former Stadtholder to the princely dignity. It would create immense scandal if here at Berlin we should accuse of murder the father of the new-made Prince. I can not and will not suffer it. Gabriel Nietzel must be freed, and——"

"Your Electoral Grace," interrupted a valet, entering the cabinet, "the Burgomaster of Cologne and Berlin, Herr Wegelin, is in the antechamber, and says that he was summoned by your highness's direction."

"Let him come in without delay," ordered the Elector, pointing impatiently to the door.

The valet hurried off, tore open the door, and on the threshold appeared Burgomaster Wegelin in his official garb —that is to say, in a long black gown hanging in voluminous folds, a broad white ruff, and a heavy gold chain wound about the shoulders and breast. With deliberate movement and with rigid gravity he raised his arm, took off the tall black cap which covered his head, and bowed.

The Elector hastily advanced to meet him, greeting him with a short nod.

"Thank you, Wegelin, for so quickly obeying my call," he said. "This is a singular affair. Memmhart reported it to you, did he not?"

"He wished to do so, your highness," slowly answered the burgomaster, "but I was already acquainted with the whole matter. The evidence of the beadle and his assistants, as well as that of several burghers who volunteered as witnesses, had already been registered, when the master builder Memmhart came. A case of high criminal jurisdiction lies before us, for the justice of God has brought to light a most atrocious criminal. The accusation includes witchcraft and murder."

"Ah, my dear Wegelin!" exclaimed Frederick William, shrugging his shoulders, "you are too intelligent to take the poor beggar Claus for a sorcerer. Surely a sorcerer would not lie before the gates of our castle as a wretched beggar, yet Claus has done so for more than six years."

"I pronounce no judgment," said the burgomaster earnestly. "The law will take its course and pass sentence."

"But this is folly and nonsense," cried the Elector, impatiently. "It would be ridiculous to bring such an accusation against a poor, crazy beggar, and it seems to me that in these troublous times we should avoid making ourselves ridiculous as much as possible. Release beggar Claus, then. It is *my* will."

On hearing these proud, imperious words, the Burgomaster of Berlin quickly threw back his head, which he had hitherto reverentially lowered, and his eyes met the Elector's stern, commanding look with a glance of defiance.

"The privileges of sanctuary are only accorded to the other side of the castle, and, had the beggar Claus been arrested there, he might have sought a pardon from our Elector, although I can not believe his highness would have extended it to him. But the beggar Claus was arrested in the cathedral square, which pertains to the jurisdiction of the municipal authorities—arrested, too, by the beadle of our city, and he also became his own accuser. He is imprisoned in the Ochsenkopf, and the magistrates, senators, and consulting counselors of the cities of Berlin and Cologne will to-morrow begin the trial, present the charges, and then pronounce sentence according to the law and their consciences."

"It seems, Burgomaster Wegelin!" cried the Elector, with flaming eyes, "that you did not hear what *I*, your lord and Elector, said. I will not have a poor, half-witted beggar brought to trial upon such an absurd accusation, and run the risk of being condemned for a murder which he could never have committed. For how could he have immured a corpse in our castle wall?"

"The skeleton is here," replied the burgomaster quietly. "It has been found within the castle walls, and the knotted handkerchief plainly shows the deceased to have been a

woman, who had been murdered and then walled up in that niche. Moreover, the man voluntarily avowed his guilt, and with howls and shrieks fell down beside the remains with every demonstration of remorse. He recognized the white dress in which the skeleton was wrapped, and with great readiness deciphered the name engraved on the handkerchief, claiming, too, a ring found on the skeleton's finger as having been a present from himself to this Rebecca before she was murdered."

"But I tell you this man is a lunatic, burgomaster. I have known him for years, when he was not the poor beggar Claus, and I will vouch for it that he did not murder this person. Let the poor simpleton go, and do not make mountains of molehills."

"In this case I can accept no security whatever, not even were it the Elector of Brandenburg himself——"

"Your lord and master, you mean," suggested the Elector.

"I stand before your highness as the Burgomaster of Berlin, and as such own no lord or master save God and my conscience! The cities of Berlin and Cologne have their rights, laws, and constitution. True, they owe the Elector reverence and submission; but they have their privileges, which may not be infringed or trampled upon. The magistrate of Berlin and Cologne is elected, not by the Elector, but by the citizens, and at his installation the burgomaster solemnly swears to defend the liberties and immunities of the cities against every aggressor, should it be the Sovereign Elector himself."

"You are at least gracious enough to recognize me as your Sovereign."

"Our Sovereign, yes, but our mayor, no. In all things just we are bound to submit humbly to your highness's wishes. But in all municipal affairs we are free, and, as your highness can not impose taxes upon us without our consent, so you durst not without the assent of city and country diminish our corporate privileges."

"Dare you threaten *me*, your Elector and master?" cried the Elector, pale with excitement and indignation.

"Sir, I do not threaten, I merely speak what is truth and justice, and what I have to defend with my life. But these

grievous times have driven us to extremities, and there are no longer any bounds to our despair. They have been robbing and plundering us for long years. All has been taken from us save the chartered liberties of our cities, and to these we must hold fast, for they are the last of our blessings. Sir Elector, I appeal to you out of a full heart, will you deprive the poor wretched burghers of this town of their honor and rights? Leave us at least the sad privilege of punishing crime according to law, and permit us in some sorry sort to keep up a feeble show of power and consideration."

"You are right to say, in some sorry sort," said the Elector, shrugging his shoulders, "for right pitiable is it that you should need to plunge some one else in grief and tribulation because you yourselves know the meaning of misfortunes and sorrows."

"We do indeed know their meaning, your highness; but our misfortunes are undeserved, and our sorrows cry out to yourself and God for redress. But on that very account we would not let the guilty criminal go unpunished. This man, who charges himself with murder, and whom his fellow-citizens accuse of sorcery and witchcraft—this man has fallen under the interdict of our town laws, and no human power can save him from the penalty incurred, unless, indeed, your highness take from us our rights, and break the laws of our constitution."

"On my accession to the government I swore to be just and impartial to all my subjects, to preserve intact the immunities of the cities and the incorruptibility of the courts, and far be it from me to attempt such a thing. Take, then, this poor unhappy man, try him, sit in judgment upon him; but try your own hearts as well, that they give no heed to falsehood, and take care lest ye pronounce unrighteous judgment, for, I tell you, your master the Elector watches over you and your judicial sentences, and will never suffer you to pronounce an innocent man guilty, nor to execute him in the hardness and obduracy of your hearts. You say you have the right to try and punish the criminal if you find him guilty. Very well; I, too, in common with all independent sovereigns, can exercise *my* right of pardoning. I can mitigate the sever-

ity of your judge's sentence, and, if the verdict is death, refuse my sanction."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the burgomaster quietly; "the right of pardon is also restricted by laws. The Sovereign can only annul and revoke a verdict when there have been the same number of voices for and against it. If there is a majority for the sentence of condemnation, you must allow it to be executed."

"Must I?" asked the Elector sternly. "Where is the law which enjoins such a thing?"

"The law of usage, most gracious sir, to which all your princely ancestors have submitted."

"But I tell you that I shall not do so!" cried the Elector with an outburst of anger. "I am not minded longer to defer to the arrogance and usurpations of the cities. No, I shall break your proud spirits, and make you feel that there is a higher law over you than the law of usage, and that is the law of reason. This law shall be made known to you through the mouth of your Prince, to him you shall bow in obedience, and to him feel subject despite your privileges and immunities. You shall make no exception, but be taught that you do not stand at your Sovereign's side, but behind him, and that *his* will is the first law of the land! Go now, Burgomaster Wegelin, take the poor beggar and sentence him in the bloodthirstiness of your justice; but be assured that I shall call you to account for it, and that neither majority nor minority shall prevent me from exercising the right of pardoning, that highest prerogative of the ruler."

"May your highness exercise it if it is in accordance with the dictates of your princely conscience," said Burgomaster Wegelin solemnly. "Grace is naturally the most sacred function of princes, but so many years of pain have elapsed since it has been extended to the miserable downtrodden people that we have forgotten to appeal to it, or to hope for its display. But your highness would now pardon the beggar Claus in case we condemn him. There is one contingency which would render your clemency of no avail."

"What contingency, Burgomaster Wegelin?"

"Why, supposing that the criminal refuses to accept your

pardon, and insists that his sentence be executed. The beggar Claus has confessed his crime. I had him brought before me, and out of his own mouth heard an acknowledgment of his guilt. He seems glad to have relieved his soul of the burden, and said passionately to me, 'I long for nothing upon earth but death, and that you must grant me, for I am a heinous malefactor, having a murderous deed upon my conscience, and you must punish me according to the strict letter of the law.'"

"Poor, unhappy man!" murmured the Elector, "he is lost, for he seeks death! Go, burgomaster," he said aloud, turning toward him; "act with the remembrance that you will one day stand yourself before the judgment seat of God. I shall do the same, and you must hereafter be forced to admit that your Elector is master of the cities as well as of the States. Go and sit in judgment upon the beggar Claus and guard the immunities of your town. Mine be it to guard the strongholds of reason and mercy! Go!"

He nodded lightly, turned his back upon the burgomaster, and entered the window recess. Not until the shutting of the door informed him that Wegelin had left the room did he emerge from his place of retreat.

"Is it not a sin and a shame to be obliged to let them try poor Gabriel Nietzel as a sorcerer and murderer, when I know that he is innocent? And yet," continued the Elector, after short reflection, "how wonderful are the ways of God, and often how strangely linked is retribution to crime! He once essayed to commit a murder for which his wife atoned. She saved me, and for this was punished with the loss of her own life by the instigator of the murder. And now, after the lapse of long years, this poor, murdered woman comes forth from her dark and secret tomb, and he for whom she died is now accused as her murderer! And vengeance pursues me for the crimes of silence and want of courage. At the time I should have named and prosecuted the true murderer, but I had not the needed courage, and therefore kept silent. And now I would again be silent, and perchance the poor desperate man may be condemned. Wegelin is right, alas! Mercy itself is restricted by laws. How shall I save Gabriel Nietzel

if he *will* not be saved? My God, my God! how small and insignificant are we princes of earth, and how well it befits us to remember in humility and contrition that we are but clay in the hands of God!"

And with an expression of deepest devotion, Frederick William folded his hands and raised his eyes to heaven.

VIII.—The Tempter.

The Elector had seated himself at work before his writing table. He again took up the legal document which he had begun to read before Memmhart's entrance, but his thoughts kept wandering, and a strange feeling of restlessness came over him.

"I do not know how it is," he said, "but I feel as if I were dreaming. There is something in the atmosphere which reminds me of the past, of those long-vanished days, that I am ever seeking to forget. What is it? Whence comes it? It seems to me as if the air I breathe were filled with memories of earlier days, and——"

"What letter is this?" he interposed, with hasty movement picking up a daintily folded letter which lay on the table beside the deed. "Good heavens!" he murmured softly, "I feel it. The recollections which haunt me arise from this paper; this paper is scented with the same perfume which *she* loved, which ever made known to me her proximity. Yes, yes, that is it. This paper has the odor of mignonette, and that was the perfume she always wore. O Ludovicka, Ludovicka! shall I then never forget you? Will memories of you never be obliterated from my soul? Hush, hush! I will read this letter! But from whom does it come, and who laid it here, and——" He uttered a low cry and sprang from his seat, his eyes immovably fixed upon the letter, which he still held in his hand.

He had only read the address, but these few words had kindled glowing flames in his breast. He had recognized the

handwriting, and his stormily beating heart told him from whom the letter came. Slowly and with trembling hands he now unfolded it and gazed upon it. The characters swam before his eyes, a cold perspiration stood in great drops upon his brow, and his heart beat so loudly that it oppressed him. By force of will he at last roused himself from this stupor. "I *will* read," he said, "I will look the past courageously in the face." He wiped the moisture from his brow and his burning eyes, struggled for breath, sighed deeply, and read:

"FREDERICK WILLIAM: I appeal to you by the memory of days of the sweetest and most sacred emotion! You, whom my soul has ever loved—you, who will live forever in my heart! Frederick William, like a dying person taking farewell of the fairest and dearest mementos of her mortal life, before descending into the grave, so I come to you! Can you have the heart to reject me? Frederick William, by the vows of eternal love and constancy which you once made to me, I adjure you come to me! I have journeyed hundreds of miles to see you; come you only a hundred paces to see me! Only a hundred paces! This evening at twilight open your cabinet door, and you will there find some one who will conduct you to me. It is your most faithful servant, and you will be assured that by him you can only be led in safe and pleasant ways. Come, Frederick William, come to a last interview preparatory to an eternal adieu."

How often he read this letter he knew not, nor how long he held it before his eyes gazing upon the prettily formed letters, fancy bringing up vividly before him the delicate little hand which had traced them and the big flaming eyes which had rested upon this paper. The fascination of her presence seemed to be so recalled by each of her words that he no longer knew whether they were actually on the page before him, or were being whispered into his ear by a sweet, alluring voice. Yes, he heard that voice, and it filled his heart with a sweet trembling and fired his soul with its magical intonations.

She had called him "by the memory of days of the sweet-

est and most sacred emotion," and those days now reappeared before him in all their glory.

Again he saw her as she had been then, so pretty, so fascinating, and he said to himself that it was he who had forsaken her and given her up. He thought of her tears, her grief; he thought also of what he had suffered for her, and how he had loved her in spite of having been forced to renounce her. How often had he seen her in his dreams, how often had he remembered her with painful longings! And now he was to see her again, to behold once more her beautiful face. "Ha! what is this?" he exclaimed suddenly, interrupting the course of his own thoughts. "What means this throbbing of the heart, this timidity? What mean you, Frederick William, by sitting here dreaming, like the enamored boy you were when you used to love the charming Princess? Have you not become a man since then, Frederick William? —have not the experiences and disenchantments forced upon you most especially by *her* steeled your breast and panoplied your heart? Have you not at your side a charming wife, who loves you and whom you love; to whom, moreover, you have pledged your troth? Why sit you here, Frederick William, listening to the siren voice of memory? Away with her enchantments! I will not hear. I will not allow myself to be deluded and become forgetful of my duties and my vows."

His countenance was fired by a glow of noble indignation, and impatiently he shook his head.

"Up, Frederick William, and be a man!" he cried. "Open your eyes and look! Away with those clouds of melancholy which would darken your intellect—away with those images of the past which would enthrall your heart. I will awake, I will see, I will be a strong, a brave, a conscientious man!"

As he thus spoke loudly and joyfully, his countenance brightened more and more, until it grew radiant with energy and glad resolve. He drew a deep breath, as if a weight had been rolled away from his soul, and a smile played about his lips as he again took up the letter which had a little while ago filled his heart with so strange a tumult of emotions.

"She is a Circe," he said softly, "and she would allure the Ulysses Frederick William. Ah! but she shall not succeed, and my pretty Penelope shall not be left to weep and mourn. But what seeks the Circe here? Wherefore would she entice me? To what end this tale of the dying friend who comes to bid me farewell—this tale of eternal, inextinguishable love? She has a reason for it, without doubt, a cogent reason: and I shall and must fathom it. Would she not perhaps bind me to France with soft chains of roses, and make me King Louis's vassal? Why should she not try that experiment once more, when it might advantage the King of France to have the Elector of Brandenburg for his ally, and the opponent of the Emperor and Lorraine? Yes, a right fine thing would it be for the brave Condé to obtain auxiliaries from me. Lorraine could then be attacked in front and rear, and overwhelmed. The King of France would thereby make the comfortable acquisition of Lorraine and Alsatia, and I—well, I would obtain many promises and praises, perhaps subsidies also, as so many other German princes, and—— Moreover, I would wear upon my forehead the brand of infamy and treason. No, no, it shall not be. Never shall history record of me that I was a traitor to Germany! I must penetrate the motive which leads the fair enchantress hither. She comes wearing a mask before her face, and time will show which of us two will outwit the other! Ah! the fair Princess Ludovicka Hollandine came a hundred miles to see me—how could I refuse to take a hundred steps to meet her? No, no, it would be cruel—heartless! I can not, I may not be deaf to her appeal! I must comply with her request!"

Twilight had come. The shadows of evening were falling. The Elector left his cabinet, passed quickly through the lighted sitting room, and opened the antechamber door.

"Come in," he said to the muffled figure standing beside the door. Silently the order was obeyed; the man entered and locked the door behind him.

"I thought it was you, Burgsdorf," said the Elector, greeting him with a smile.

"Your highness, I crave your pardon for this boldness!" cried Burgsdorf.

"Hush!" interrupted the Elector, "do not speak so loud. We might be overheard."

"Ah!" thought Burgsdorf, "he would not have our conversation overheard! The fish has caught at the bait, then! He has betrayed nothing to his wife.—Most gracious sir," he said in an undertone, "for God's sake, tell me whether I am awake or asleep—whether this is all a dream or do I actually live to see it?"

"Tell me, first of all, what you have lived to see."

"An adventure, your highness—a remarkable adventure. Condescend to hear what has happened."

He gave the Elector a detailed and exact account of the arrival of the stranger, who had quartered herself at his house in the character of his daughter. He only omitted to tell the principal thing—namely, the object of her coming. His portraiture of the unknown, too, did not quite correspond with the reality, for he very adroitly concealed her haughtiness and free-and-easy manners, making of her an Aspasia or a Magdalen.

Frederick William had hearkened with close attention. "And she did not tell you her name?" he asked, when Burgsdorf had finished his well-spun narrative.

"No, your highness, she said no one in Berlin should know her name save yourself. With all others she would pass for Madame von Kanitz."

The Elector was so absorbed in thought that he did not observe the quick, cunning look with which Burgsdorf scanned his countenance, as if to read there what was passing within.

"If he says now that his wife must also know the name," thought Burgsdorf, "then are we lost, and all has been in vain."

But the Elector said no such thing. He stepped to the window and looked out upon the cathedral square.

"It is already dark," he said.

"Yes, your highness," replied Burgsdorf in a low tone. "It has been dark already some time, and the lady has been expecting the Elector for at least an hour.

"Is she at your house?"

"Yes, gracious sir, I have the key to the garden gate with

me, and your highness will meet no one at all on your way to visit the strange lady. She bade me use every precaution to prevent your highness from being observed. She says as far as she is concerned it matters not, but she would not for anything in the world have your highness compromised on her account."

"She would appear kind and considerate," thought the Elector. "I am to believe that she would grieve to injure another. Come, Burgsdorf," he said, "let us go."

"I have brought your highness a cloak," whispered Burgsdorf, "else somebody might recognize us."

He took the cloak, which he had deposited near the door, and wrapped it around the Elector; then drew from his pocket a simple cloth cap, and with it covered the brown locks of his master.

"Now, if such are your highness's orders, we can go," he said.

"Let us go through the small passage which leads from my dressing room to the private staircase. But before we go I have one word to say to you, old friend. You are not to think unworthily of your lord and Elector; therefore I tell you that this lady whom we are now going to see has no claims upon me of any kind, nor have I ever stood in any relation to her which would not bear exposure to the light of the world and the eye of my Maker."

"Your highness," said Burgsdorf, with deep seriousness, "one need only once look upon this noble, royal lady to know that it would be impossible to suspect her of aught improper, and when one, moreover, has the good fortune to know your highness and the spotless purity of your life, what room is left for light and frivolous comment? I have taken good care not to trouble my thick skull with suppositions as to what this lady can have to say to your highness. What could I gain by it? I never could understand such delicate matters, and might just as well dismiss all care on the subject. I serve my master like a faithful dog, following his steps, and perfectly content if he only gives me his orders by a wink of the eye."

The Elector laid his hand on Burgsdorf's shoulder, nod-

ding to him with a friendly smile. "I know that you love me, old friend," he said; "you know, too, that I return your affection, for this is not the first time that I have addressed you as Father Burgsdorf."

"And God knows, your highness!" cried Burgsdorf, his voice choked with tears—"God knows that in the silent depths of my heart I call you my beloved, my revered son."

"Come then, let us softly descend the private stairway —right softly, so that no one may hear our steps. And hark! one thing more. You are an old tattler, but little used to keeping secrets. This time hold your tongue, that——"

"Sir," interposed Burgsdorf indignantly, "I would tear out my tongue before it should dare to betray one word of this affair."

"Very good. I believe you. Forward now. To your house! Come!"

IX.—Meeting Again.

With a trembling heart, pale from excitement and suspense, Ludovicka Hollandine tarried in her chamber. A long, tedious hour had elapsed since Burgsdorf had left her to fetch the Elector. What if he had gone in vain? What if the Elector should not come? What if the present should have greater influence over him than the past? At this thought a pain darted through her heart, as if it had been pierced by a dagger. "My God! my God!" she murmured softly, "I am afraid that I love him still, and that the sport will at last end in grave, solemn earnest. I—I hear steps," she whispered, springing from her seat. "Yes, yes, they come nearer and nearer. Be with me now, spirit of love, irradiate my countenance, animate my heart!

"He is here. He comes to me!" exulted she aloud, as the door opened and the Elector entered. She hastened to meet him with outstretched arms, then paused hesitatingly, cast one long, glowing glance into his pale and agitated face, and then with a low cry of pain clasped both hands before

her face, and tottered backward, trembling like a lily bending before the storm.

The Elector sprang forward and caught the sinking form in his arms, pressing her to his heart, overpowered by his own feelings, carried away by the sweet recollections which rushed upon him. But this only lasted one short minute, for Frederick William had a consciousness of the danger which hovered over him, and his brave heart whispered: "Do not allow yourself to be deceived—be strong, be a man! Remember, she is a Circe. Resist her, but let not the mask fall from your own face."

Silently and languidly she rested her head against his breast, and he bent forward and kissed her raven-black hair.

"Rest there, poor frightened dove," he said softly and with quivering voice. "The storms of life have parted us, and now for one short moment have brought us together. Let us enjoy the boon, and thank God for having granted it."

She only answered by a sob and floods of tears.

"Ludovicka," he said—"sweet Ludovicka, weep not. Welcome, thrice welcome, idol of my youth!"

"Blessed be the hour of reunion!" cried she, deeply moved. She lifted her head from his breast and looked at him with her large beaming eyes, and the fascinating smile played as of old around her cherry lips. The magic of her influence again made itself felt as in earlier days, and his whole heart swelled with admiration and rapture. But again he controlled himself by the force of his will.

"Be a man, Frederick William! Do not allow yourself to be deceived and ensnared. Place a guard before the door of your lips and your heart!"

"Look at me, Frederick," she whispered. "Behold the ravages of these dreadful years! Read the story of their pains and disappointments in the lines which they have drawn upon my face."

"No," said he smiling, "they have not been so cruel. They have not dared to touch that open brow, those rosy cheeks. Not a shadow has dimmed their beauty."

"But the shadow lies on my soul and my heart!" cried she bitterly. "No, do not look at me so kindly, Frederick,

for beneath those looks my strength and my steadfastness waver, and the ice in which my heart is incrusted melts before your smile. I have come to bid you a last farewell."

"Farewell?" asked he. "And whither would you go, Ludovicka Hollandine?"

"What said the gladiators as they entered the arena and bowed before their masters? They said, 'Those who are about to die greet thee.' That was their farewell, and nobody asked them whither they were going, for everybody knew that for them there was only one path, and that led but to the tomb. Like those gladiators, Frederick William, I have fought with lions and tigers, and have come forth from the conflict with torn and bleeding heart and a soul weary unto death. My spirit is broken, and, renouncing all the vanities of earth, I would flee to God, to serve him in a solitary cell as in an open sepulcher."

A shadow passed over Frederick William's face, and he remarked more coldly:

"True, they told me that the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine had fled from her mother's house with a French nobleman, never to return there. They told me, moreover, that the Princess had proved false to the faith of her house, and forsaken her religion, as she had done the paternal roof."

"And they told you the truth!" she cried in bitter tones. "Yes, I am a castaway, an apostate. I bow my head in humility and shame, acknowledging my guilt. I am come, Frederick William, to do penance before you, and to lay bare my heart to you. You must receive my confession: 'She who is about to die greets you.' Oh, turn not your head away from me, Frederick; behold me at your feet, a penitent torn with grief!"

"Good heavens, Princess, what are you doing?" he cried, as she sank upon her knees before him, and imploringly lifted up to him her folded hands. "Rise, Ludovicka, for it becomes you not to kneel before me."

"I would confess on my knees," she said, "to God and to *you*, my first, my only love. Indeed, Frederick, you were my first, my only love, and when, despite my tears, my entreaties, you thrust me from you, I was lost! It seemed to

me as if nothing were true or sacred upon earth, when the only man I loved had the cruel determination to turn from me and give me up! A wild despair took possession of me; I could no longer abide in the house where everything reminded me of you and my ruined affections. I must away, away, out into the world, to bury myself and my memories in the loneliness of a foreign land. I fled, and the only friend who remained to me, Count d'Entragues, took pity upon me. He conducted me to the house of his sister, the noble, virtuous Princess Épioles, and in a secluded castle among the Cevennes I passed long, solitary years of mourning and penance. I know the cruel, pitiless world interpreted my flight differently. Count d'Entragues was supposed to be my lover, and it was said that out of love for him I had followed him to France! But ask your own heart, Frederick; do you believe that, with your kisses yet warm upon my cheek, your vows of love still ringing in my ears, I could have loved another? No, you can not think so badly of one whom you once loved. You know that in the ectasy of my grief I fled from reflection, from my love of you—that love which you had so ruthlessly trampled in the dust. And yet I could not be angry with you, and my love went with me into that land of strangers. I tried to break loose from it; I longed to forget—oh, to forget at any price! I sought to drown the voice which was forever speaking to my heart of the past; I resolved to take refuge in religion since you had deserted me. I would make Christ the bridegroom of my soul, and give him the love that you had despised! I became a Catholic. And now it seemed as if peace were about to return to me, and as if my heart found repose amid the tears and prayers of anguish which I perpetually uplifted to my heavenly bridegroom. Alas! if they had allowed me then to take the veil, perhaps my grievous wound might have healed, and my heart become patient and subdued. But my mother and my relatives would not suffer it. My uncle, King Charles of England, had written with his own hand to his Holiness at Rome and to the King of France, beseeching them to forbid my admission into a convent. Consequently, all monasteries shut their gates against me, and once more I was thrust out into the cold,

heartless world. Now came over me a spirit of wild despair and raging resentment. I had sought forgetfulness in sacred retirement, and that being denied me, I sought it in the bustle of the world, in the tumult of life. Since I could not be a pious, melancholy nun, I became a gay, haughty woman of the world, laughed at my own grief, and mocked my own heart, that still wept over its lost happiness. I would give the death-stroke to love by kindling a new flame. In vain! All in vain! I decked my head with roses, but only felt their thorns; I put the golden goblet of joy to my lips, but the sparkling wine tasted but of the drops of bitterness lurking beneath the surface. I rushed into scenes of gayety and amusement, and still experienced nought but an infinite *ennui*, a sickening weariness, which forced tears to my eyes while I seemed to smile, and filled my heart with woe while my lips spoke words of merriment."

"Poor Ludovicka!" whispered the Elector. "Poor, much-to-be-pitied woman! I weep over you as Jeremiah wept over the ruins of Jerusalem!" And he drew his hand across his eyes to repress the gushing tears.

"Ah!" cried she sadly, "you pity me, you weep over me! Frederick, these tears comfort me for all the tortures I have endured, indemnify me for all my sufferings. I thank you for those tears; they shall be the diamonds whose brightness will shine for me in my lonely cell, the only jewels of memory. For there is nothing now to prevent my entering a convent. My uncle, King Charles, is no more, and Cardinal Mazarin rules over France. From him I have obtained permission to take the veil, and upon his intercession Queen Anne consented to appoint me prioress of an abbey. Before cleaving asunder all ties that bound me to the outer world, I longed to see once more the beloved of my youth. To you alone of all the world would I bid farewell. And so I have come to you, Frederick, and kneeling at your feet have made confession of all my past wanderings. And now extend to me your hand; promise that you will think of me as a friend, that you will sacredly cherish recollections of the past, and when God in mercy shall call me from the trials of life, you will shed for me one tear of pity and commiseration."

The Elector stooped over her, gently assisted her to rise, and led her to a seat. "Be comforted, poor mourner," he said, in low tones. "Forget for one short hour what you have undergone, and only remember that a faithful friend is at your side, who never can forget you, and who by no means ceased to love you when he was forced to leave you. Long did you reign in his heart, and even when he had cause to think you unworthy of his love, he could not drive your sweet image from his soul. But now, Ludovicka, now I am the husband of a woman whom I truly love, and who brightens my life with gentle happiness. The glowing love which I once felt has changed into tender friendship, a friendship which would withdraw you from all the sorrows of earth, and rejoice to offer you here an asylum from all the storms of life. I can not be your lover, but, Ludovicka, will you accept me as your friend, your brother?"

"Yes," she cried, with a fond look, "yes, I will."

"Come then, dear friend, come to my house. Here, in the haven of true friendship, find a retreat secure from all the storms of the world. I would conduct you to my wife. Like myself, she will give you a cordial welcome."

"No!" she cried earnestly, "that I can not do! The sight of your happiness would kill me, or fill my soul with envy and repining. You give me your friendship, and I thank you for this crumb; but in me, Frederick, shines still the sun of my youthful love, and never will it set. Let me be consumed by its ardent rays; I shall never desire it to change into the soft moonlight of friendship. I can not see your wife, at least not yet! Grant me a few days of rest in which to gain self-control. Perhaps I may succeed in conquering my feelings, and attaining at least some degree of composure and resignation. To this end I shall direct my efforts, and it will be the last, greatest sacrifice I shall offer to the world before forsaking it forever. Grant me just two days, Frederick, and you will see that from you I have learned patience and gentleness. But until then, let my presence here remain a secret, to be revealed to no one, not even your wife. I have come here to see you only secretly, and under a feigned name. The trusty old Burgsdorf alone knows that I am other than

I seem, and probably suspects who I am. Promise me, Frederick, to keep my secret."

"Well, Ludovicka, my friend, I promise," he said, and she saw not the light mocking smile which for a moment played about his lips. "No one shall know that you are here. I shall keep silence until you yourself take the seal from my lips by saying that you feel able to meet your Cousin Louisa."

"Thank you, Frederick, and may God grant me power to restrain my feelings and see your wife. But, alas! I fear it may not be. Just permit me a few days of rest, and, above all, grant me the pleasure of your society during that space of time. For fourteen years of grief and torture I only ask four days of sunshine, to be dedicated to the past. Will you grant them to me, Frederick William?"

"Not merely to you, but to myself, Ludovicka," said the Elector warmly. "Four days consecrated to memory and friendship, four days apart from the conventionalities of this world and the engrossing cares of government. I shall give myself up to enjoying them with you, and when they are past their remembrance will gladden my heart. But where will you stay these four days, sweet cousin?"

"Here, my adored Sovereign and friend—here, in the house of good, trustworthy old Burgsdorf, on whom I forced myself as his daughter, and who, in the goodness of his heart, had not courage to say me nay. Ah! you have a devoted servant in him, and long had I to plead with him before he would consent to hand my note to his beloved Elector. I had to give him my word of honor that I had no evil designs against you. I shall never forget that it was he to whom I owe the last joy of my life, and I shall ever include him in my prayers. May God long preserve to you, Frederick William, this faithful friend and counselor! But now, my lord and Elector, you must go. The night is advancing, and I would not cause uneasiness to another's heart. Go, Frederick, but promise me, beloved friend, to see me again to-morrow."

"I promise you, or rather myself, to devote another hour to-morrow to friendship's sweet communings. I shall come, rest assured of that."

"And forget not to keep the secret of my being here from every one."

"I shall not forget, Ludovicka, thou star of youthful love. Farewell, farewell!"

He took her hand and pressed it to his lips. But she bent forward and offered him her cheek. "I am not yet a nun," she said, with an enchanting smile and a glowing flash of light in her eyes. "I still belong to the world, and the last earthly kiss these lips receive they would receive from you, Frederick William."

She was so beautiful to behold, so fascinating, that it was difficult to resist the magic of her charms. Frederick William's arms had well-nigh opened to press the ravishing form to his heart as he stooped to take the proffered kiss. "But no," he murmured—"no, it may not be!" And drawing himself up, he hurried to the door. "Farewell, Princess, till to-morrow, farewell!"

Princess Ludovicka followed him with a long, triumphant look. "I shall not leave at the expiration of four days," she said, smiling. "I shall manage to summon sufficient courage, not merely to see her, but to stay with her. For I see that it will not be so easy a thing to work upon the dear, virtuous Elector, and it will require some time to get him completely in my toils."

And, as with quick steps he returned to the castle, the Elector said to himself: "It seems clear to me that I am on the right track, and that it is a political intrigue, in which old Burgsdorf also has a part to play, for she praised him excessively as my most faithful counselor. Well, we shall see. The first thing I shall do is to write to Princess Amelia at The Hague, to ask her for more particular information concerning the Princess Ludovicka! To-morrow morning early a courier sets off with letters of condolence on the occasion of Prince William's death. He shall also be the bearer of my letter to Princess Amelia, and from her I shall probably obtain some reliable information."

X.—The Trial.

Three days after the imprisonment of beggar Claus, his case was for the first time investigated before the joint tribunal of Berlin and Cologne. It was a solemn occasion, looked forward to with the greatest interest and curiosity by all Berlin. Envied were those who had the good fortune to be summoned to the great city hall, where the criminal court was accustomed to hold its sessions. Fürberg, the tailor, Wendt, the shoemaker, Ewald, the cobbler, and Kurt, the leech, were of course numbered among the witnesses cited by the high magistrate, and the master builder Memmhart, with a few of his apprentices and workmen, had also been called upon to testify against the beggar who was to be tried for heinous crimes. Dense was the multitude packed into the little square in front of the senate house and in the streets adjoining, and, although the session lasted many hours, not one would leave his place and go home to work until he had heard the issue of the affair. Especially were they curious to learn whether the criminal had confessed, or what defense he had made, and whether they might hope that he would meet the punishment due his crime.

"It is impossible that they can do anything else but condemn him," said one burgher to his neighbor. "The whole city knows that it is proved that he is a sorcerer, and he has himself acknowledged that he is a murderer; consequently, it is impossible that he can escape."

"I hope he will be hanged," answered the neighbor. "It would be particularly welcome just now. Trade is very dull, and, although everybody knows my brandy and beer to be the best in Berlin, money comes in too slowly for my use. Now, my house is just in front of the place where the execution is to be. If it should come off, wouldn't I coin money, for, besides the liquor which the gay spectators will need, I shall have the whole front of my house faced with scaffolding, and get a good price for the seats. An execution, you know, does not take place every day."

It would be too revolting to polite ears to be called upon

to hear more of the coarse conversation carried on amid a mob upon an occasion like the present, fitted to arouse all the more brutal instincts of a degraded populace. Many and cruel were the jests bandied from mouth to mouth. All seemed to look forward with detestable glee to the hour when they might behold the punishment of a wretch whom they thought it a virtue to abhor. Not even a woman's voice was heard to utter one accent of pity or sympathy: men, women, and children all mingled their voices in one chorus of hatred and malignity. Nought would satisfy them but the blood of the loathed being whom they stigmatized as a wizard and murderer.

While the people were entertaining each other in such manner without the senate house, the court had commenced its session within. The judges and counselors had seated themselves upon their high-backed chairs behind the table covered with black cloth, the witnesses summoned had taken their places on the bench, and then Burgomaster Wegelin had given the beadle a signal to bring the culprit in.

All eyes now turned toward the dark little sidedoor through which he must enter, and, although everybody knew the beggar Claus, yet all were curious to behold him in his new character of wizard and murderer. The door opened, and the beggar, chained hand and foot and clad in his gray gown, followed the beadle into the long, dark hall. Deep, solemn silence prevailed as he stepped slowly forward; no sound was heard save the rattling and clanking of his chains. Close to the long table of the judges the beadle led the accused, bidding him take his place on the wooden block for criminals, while he with his posse took his station behind him.

The clerk of the court arose and read the indictment, charging beggar Claus with murder, witchcraft, and sorcery. Every one fixed his glance upon the accused, and saw with astonishment that this horrible accusation made no impression whatever upon him. His countenance was wonderfully calm and serene, and his features betrayed nought of the anguish of a criminal arraigned before his judges. He had folded his hands over his breast, his eyes were turned heavenward, and about his lips hovered an almost cheerful smile.

When the reading of the accusation was over, the presiding judge arose. "Claus," he said, "you have heard the charges against you. Do you acknowledge yourself guilty?"

He did not answer immediately. Slowly he took a survey of all assembled, and long did his glance rest upon the four burghers who appeared as his accusers in the matter of witchcraft. Involuntarily they reddened beneath his gaze, and cast down their eyes. Claus smiled and then turned his glance upon Memmhart, who was watching him with sympathizing looks.

"Prisoner," repeated the judge, "answer. Do you acknowledge yourself guilty of the crimes charged against you?"

"I can not answer, sir, unless you will permit me first to ask Herr Memmhart a question," gently replied the beggar. "If your lordships will grant me that favor, I shall afterward give you a candid answer."

The judges put their heads together, advising with one another in low tones.

"Claus," said the presiding judge, "since you say that your answer is dependent upon what you have to say to the master builder Memmhart, we grant your request to avoid undue delay. Speak, then!"

The beggar returned thanks with a gentle inclination of his head, and once more turned his large, blue eyes upon the master builder.

"Herr Memmhart," he asked with trembling voice, and a flush tinged his pale cheeks with red, to be succeeded by a deeper pallor—"Herr Memmhart, will you answer me just this one thing: What have you done with the sacred remains you discovered in the castle-wall? Where are they? I beseech you, sir, by all you hold sacred, to answer me truthfully."

"I will answer you truthfully, Claus," replied the master builder solemnly. "The bones found by us in yonder walls were deposited in a coffin yesterday evening by our most gracious Elector's orders, and buried in the cathedral churchyard. His highness also bade me to have a stone cross prepared, to place at the head of the grave, inscribed with the name 'Rebecca.'"

The beggar listened to him with suspended breath, and two tears slowly coursed down his sunken cheeks.

"I thank you, O Lord my God!" he murmured to himself. "Now I can die, for my vow is accomplished. I have nothing more to live for since I have found Rebecca's grave. Say to the Elector," he cried, "that from the depths of my soul I thank him for this grace, extended not merely to the dead, but to a wretched man who durst not die, until he had found her grave."

"Claus," said the presiding officer of the court, "for the third time I ask you, are you guilty or not guilty of the crimes charged against you?"

"Guilty!" cried Claus joyfully. "Yes, I confess my guilt. Punish me according to the severity of the law! I am a murderer! The woman whose skeleton you found in the castle wall perished through my fault. That I swear by the Holy Trinity, by God and all his holy angels. I and I alone am to blame for her death. I am a sorcerer and master of magic, and it is exactly as Ewald, the cobbler, lately said: I have a spirit in a little vial which tells me all that I would know. Now sentence me, lead me out to die, for you know all—you know that I deserve to die. Oh, give me death! From the depths of my soul, I beg you for it. Let me die, that my sins may be expiated!"

"We let nobody die," said the presiding judge sternly, "unless the judge has sentenced him and the laws condemned him. The law acts compassionately toward the criminal, requiring judges to sift carefully all evidence deposed, and providing an advocate to plead the cause of the accused, in opposition to his accusers. The law offers its protection even to such a vagabond and beggar as Claus. We would now receive the depositions of the witnesses. Herr Memmhart, advance and give us your statement with regard to the discovery of the skeleton, and all that passed afterward."

The master builder obeyed, speaking with a clear, distinct voice. It was observable that he tried to spare the prisoner as much as possible, and was very unwilling to injure him by his evidence. He omitted to state that Claus had caught hold of him, and possessed himself of the ring by force, and

that he had in like violent manner appropriated the veil. But the beggar himself reminded him of these things, and supplied with circumstantial exactness particulars which Memmhart had compassionately forborne to mention.

"Is it as Claus says?" asked the president. "Has he actually been guilty of street robbery besides, and taken a ring and veil away from you by force?"

"Yes, it is so," replied Memmhart, sighing. "But I do not believe he did it with the intent to rob, but merely, as it seemed, because those things were precious mementos of one he had probably loved."

"No!" cried Claus eagerly. "I did do it with the intent to rob. The ring was of pure gold, and the veil trimmed with costly lace. I wanted these things that I might sell them again. I am not, therefore, merely a murderer and sorcerer, but a highwayman also!"

"It will all be in vain," muttered Memmhart to himself; "he will not be saved."

"The *corpus delicti*, the ring, has also been found upon the person of the prisoner," said the president. "The beadle committed it to my keeping, and here it is. Herr Memmhart, do you identify this ring as the one taken from you by Claus?"

The page for the court handed the trinket to the master builder. "I do not know," he said, examining it narrowly. "I can not swear that this is the very same ring, for I hardly saw it."

"Let me see the ring, sirs!" cried Claus, stretching out his hand. "I can tell you whether it is the identical ring."

Upon a sign of assent from the judge the page brought the ring to the prisoner. He clutched at it with trembling fingers and looked at it. "Yes, this is the ring!" he cried, in a loud exulting voice. "This is my Rebecca's ring. It is *my* ring, and nobody shall take it from me."

And before the page could suspect his purpose, Claus thrust the little gold ring into his mouth and swallowed it.

"Now take my ring, my treasure!" he cried triumphantly. "My Rebecca's corpse lies buried in the churchyard, and I myself will become the tomb of her ring; my body is now

the shrine of a holy relic. Sentence me—sentence me now, for have I not committed another crime, another robbery?"

"You are a wild, unmanageable fellow," said the judge; "and if you go on so we shall know how to tame you by giving you a taste of the rack. Remember that, and be reverential and submissive. Now let the other witnesses be heard."

The other witnesses were less reserved and moderate in their mode of giving evidence. They charged beggar Claus with sorcery. They told that he had shown them where to find things which had been lost without his having any natural way of knowing anything about them. They also testified that when in astonishment they had asked how he had obtained such knowledge, beggar Claus replied that he kept a spirit in a vial, who was obliged to tell him whatever he wanted to know.*

"Is that true? Did you really say that?" asked the president of the court.

"Have you not the proofs of it in your own hands?" replied Claus, with a scornful laugh. "Did not the beadle hand over to you all that he so rudely took from me when he searched my person? If he did not hand over that golden box to you, most worshipful judges, then he is a thief and robber, deserving to occupy a criminal's place with me."

"Silence, and make no railing accusation against an honest, worthy man," ordered the president. "Certainly, the beadle committed the gold box to our care, and it lies here on the table as an evidence against you."

"Then have the goodness to open it, worshipful sir, and you will find within the vial, where abides the spirit who reveals all things to me."

"It does not become a good Christian to meddle with such devilish things, or touch them with his finger, and it is perfectly sufficient to hear your testimony on the subject. We will not allow ourselves to be further troubled with such an abominable piece of witchcraft. Beadle, have you the hammer ready as we bade you?"

* This was actually the main accusation against beggar Claus. *Vide* König, Description of Berlin, part 2, p. 67.

"Yes, high puissant sir, I have it ready," replied the beadle, with a low reverence.

"Fetch it here, then; place this little gold box on the wooden block beside the prisoner, and shatter it to pieces, calling upon the Holy Trinity all the while!"

The beadle hurried to a corner of the hall, and brought forth a huge hammer. With this he approached the wooden block on which he had laid the gold box, and lifted his arm for a first stroke.

But at this instant Claus grasped his arm and held him fast. "For God's sake," he said, "if your life is dear to you, and if you would not have the devil appear among you with thunder and lightning, pitch and sulphur, then desist from your mad undertaking, and attempt not to shatter the little box and its contents. For if you break the vial, you will free the devil within, and he will be loose among you all. Wise masters, I beseech you, for your own soul's sake, to command your beadle, Master Krüger, not to attempt aught so dangerous and presumptuous."

With an expression of horror and dismay the beadle had shrunk back a little; the judges looked at one another with pale faces, and then spoke together in low whispers.

"Beadle," commanded the president of the court, "lay aside your hammer. For the present we will defer the breaking of the little box."

At this instant the door opened and the porter announced with loud voice, "A messenger from his most serene Highness the Elector!"

"He may present himself before us!" cried the president, and Chamberlain Künkel entered the hall.

"I have a communication to lay before this high tribunal from the most noble Elector, written with his own hand," said he, bowing low; and stepping up to the black table, he laid down upon it a large sealed packet. Then his eyes slowly swept through the hall, and when they fell upon Claus he gave him a slight nod of the head. A ray of joy flashed across the beggar's face. "Sirs," he cried, "I will now prove to you that I have spoken the truth in declaring myself to be a sorcerer. Let me take that magical gold box in my hand,

and then I will tell you what is written in the Elector's letter."

"Take the devilish thing, and give us a proof of your diabolical art. Tell us what are the contents of our Sovereign Elector's communication."

Claus took the box up from the block and pressed it fervently to his lips. "Well, hear ye, worshipful lords," he said. "His highness's writing reads as follows: 'The Elector demands of these august judges that they restore to the beggar Claus a little golden box which he wears around his neck, and which has been taken from him, since the Elector once promised him that nobody should deprive him of this piece of property so long as he lived!' Now, gentlemen, see if such are not the contents of that document."

"It is indeed so," almost shrieked the president, turning pale. "Yes, hear what the Elector says:

"'Sending our surgeon yesterday to examine the condition of health of your prisoner, beggar Claus, he returned to me with a most urgent petition, which makes us feel compelled to make known to you the following: Beggar Claus wears on a ribbon around his neck a little golden box, which is his own. I have given him my Electoral word that no one shall deprive him of this so long as he lives. Therefore, I require you instantly to return to him his own property and not to pretend to deprive him of it. For justice and law should be dispensed to all equally, the beggar as well as the noble. Begging your prompt attention to this matter, I remain,

"'Your gracious Lord and Elector.'"

After the presiding judge had read this communication in a loud voice, he offered it to the one sitting at his side, who, after looking at it, gave it to his neighbor, and as the paper thus made the rounds all faces grew pale, and there was a general murmur of: "He has produced the proof. He spoke the truth."

With inexpressible awe and aversion, all eyes were fixed upon the beggar, who alone preserved a cheerful, tranquil expression.

"Gracious sirs," he implored, "will you now condescend to restore to me my property, and leave me in its undisturbed possession? You know my summons to leave this vale of misery can not long be deferred now."

"Take the little box and keep it," said the presiding judge solemnly. "You have proved before us all that you know hidden things. You do not deny being the murderer of the woman discovered in the castle wall, and, in accordance with the testimony of these witnesses, you acknowledge having engaged in the practice of witchcraft. You therefore stand convicted of the most dreadful crimes. Beggar Claus is a wizard, a conjurer, and a murderer. I accuse him of these crimes, but before I pronounce sentence against him I summon to speak in his defense the advocate whom the benevolence of the law provides to plead in behalf of the criminal."

"Gentlemen," cried Claus, with anxious mien, "I want no defense, I decline the aid of the advocate accorded me by the benevolence of the law."

"And if Claus were to make no such protest," said the advocate, rising from his seat beside the judges, "yet really I should not know how to set about defending him. He has pleaded guilty to all the charges brought against him, and I can see no indication whatever of innocence."

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Defendant, thank you!" cried Claus joyfully. "You are indeed my advocate, since you refuse to undertake my defense."

Now the presiding judge arose, taking in his hand the white wooden staff which lay on the table before him.

"Nothing remains to be done," he said, "but to pronounce sentence. In the name of the public safety, in the name of the law, I lay the ban of the city upon this prisoner, and my verdict is death. In token whereof I break this staff. Ye judges and dispensers of law, whoever is of my opinion let him do the same. Let him who dissents from this judgment refrain from breaking his staff. Such is right, act accordingly in the name of God and justice!"

The judges rose to their feet, each taking his white staff in his hand. A pause ensued. All faces were grave and solemn. Each one felt in his quivering heart the deep signifi-

cance of this moment, which was about to decide the fate of a human being.

Claus had sunk upon his knees and buried his face in his hands, the master builder Memmhart and the rest of the witnesses stood up, looking breathlessly toward the judges, and Chamberlain Künkel, who, smitten with horror, had retreated to the door, could not prevail upon himself to leave the spot, but stood there awaiting the decision with anxious looks.

In the midst of this awful silence was suddenly heard the cracking and splitting of the staves, which the judges broke in twain.

Then all was again still, and these twelve men in their long, black robes, with their pale, earnest faces, resumed their places in the high-backed chairs. The president of the court called out, "Page, collect the broken and sound staves and bring them to me to count."

The page went to the table, gathered together all the staves, and laid them before the judge.

"Mr. President," he said, "here are the staves. There is not a sound one among them."

The president slowly counted the staves and laid them side by side upon the table.

"All twelve staves are broken," he said. "The accused is unanimously condemned to die."

"Rebecca, my Rebecca!" murmured Claus, "you release me, you call me to yourself!"

"Claus," continued the president solemnly, "you are judged worthy of death by us all, the verdict being given in accordance with law and right. You are to die by the hand of the executioner in front of the city hall. Your head is to be severed from the trunk by the axe, your body afterward burned, and the ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven!"

Another pause ensued, and the looks now directed toward Claus spoke feelings of pity and sympathy. He slowly rose from his knees and stood up firm and erect.

"I thank my judges for their sentence," he said quietly. "I accept it, and am ready to die."

"The law grants the condemned criminal eight days' respite, that he may appeal to our Sovereign Elector, either for

pardon or a commutation of the sentence to one of perpetual imprisonment. Consider what you will do, Claus, and profit well by these eight days of grace."

"Mr. President!" cried Claus anxiously, "I have no request to make but this one: Will my judges graciously forbear prolonging my tortures?—will they grant my last, my only petition, and give me without delay the death I so richly merit and which in mercy you have adjudged to be my due?"

The president, however, answered him not. He signed to the beadle and his attendants. "Conduct the prisoner back to his cell now, and guard him well."

They seized him by both arms and led him away. Silently each looked after him, and even the burghers and mechanics who had testified with such bitterness against Claus seemed, now that sentence had been passed, to be more mildly disposed. Perhaps they even felt something like remorse, for they did not triumph, but walked slowly away with bowed heads.

Chamberlain Künkel, too, made haste to leave the senate house, and would willingly have returned to the castle at a quick pace, but he could only advance slowly through the thronging multitude that filled the senate house and adjoining streets, as well as the long bridge and the cathedral square. The people had just heard the verdict from the witnesses, who had descended among them, and received the tidings with a deafening shout of applause and rejoicing. Then, with loud screams, they called upon Kurt, the leech, to tell them the whole story, and Kurt posted himself upon a curbstone and began his narrative.

The people pressed closer and closer, listening in breathless suspense to the leech's account of the trial. Only with difficulty could the Electoral chamberlain force his way through, and many a thrust had he to give and many a curse sounded behind him before he finally gained the castle door. He sprang quickly up the stairs, and hurried to the Electoral apartments.

The Elector had already seen him enter the antechamber, and opened his cabinet door.

"Come in, Künkel," he ordered, "and tell me quickly: Have they condemned Claus?"

"Yes, your highness, they have sentenced him to die by the executioner's axe, and the sentence was unanimous. However, they granted him a respite of eight days in case he should wish to petition your highness for pardon. But he begged for speedy death."

A dark flush suffused the Elector's face. With a wave of his hand he signed to Künkel to withdraw, and then with long strides angrily paced the apartment.

"Unanimously!" he cried, stopping suddenly in the middle of the room, "they have unanimously condemned him to death. Ah! they would defy me; they would show me that they are free, independent judges, and that my wishes weigh nothing in the scale! But I shall prove to them that I am their lord and master, whom the divine right of pardon exalts above them all, and who can bring to naught what their childish wisdom and foolish superstition have devised. No, you proud blockheads! you superstitious fools! you shall not execute poor, miserable Gabriel Nietzel as a murderer and sorcerer. I will save the poor man in spite of you and himself. Yes, yes, no innocent man shall be condemned, and the irrationality of man shall not make a criminal out of a poor penitent, who has already undergone fourteen years of penance. I must and shall save Gabriel Nietzel! I will soften his heart, so that he will accept the pardon which I offer him. I shall send Künkel to Joachim's vale for Jacob Uhle. Gabriel shall see his son, and that son shall beg him to accept life at my hands. Oh, I think that will touch his heart, and he will want to live again when he sees his son. Yes, yes, that will answer. But how sad and wretched is all this!" he continued, slowly shaking his head and lifting his eyes to heaven. "Men only try to devour one another; they are cruel and bloodthirsty, delighting in revenge. And yet, all are the children of one God, and all stand so much in need of mercy! O God! pity our necessity! Be gracious to me, O Lord! and grant me the greatest happiness that a prince may know, the happiness of dispensing pardon!"

BOOK IV.

I.—Politics and Intrigues.

"This, then, is the day for the Princess Ludovicka's decision," said the Elector to himself, as he returned to his cabinet after holding his morning conference with ministers and councilors. "Yes, to-day Ludovicka will be obliged either to take leave of me and depart hence or to come to the castle to be at last presented to her cousin. That is the alternative which I yesterday placed before her, and I am really curious to see what course she will pursue. If she goes, I shall have done her injustice in supposing that she was conducting a political intrigue, but if she stays, I shall think that I was right, and that the fair Ludovicka Hollandine cared less to see the beloved of her youth than the present Elector of Brandenburg, and that she seeks something else here than to revive memories of her love. But what is it that she seeks, and to what purpose is this masquerade? Can the Princess actually have been sent here by France? Is it possible that it can be an object with any one to gain Brandenburg for an ally and friend?"

The Elector sighed and seated himself before the writing table, which was loaded with documents of various kinds. "It goes ill with us," he said, shaking his head. "Our feud with the Count Palatine of Neuburg has turned greatly to our disadvantage, and yet I was right, and the grasping old Elector had neither law nor justice on his side in his attempt to wrest from me my countship of Berg. I would have been dishonored if I had voluntarily submitted to this robbery, and I was compelled to take up my sword to defend my rights.*

* The petty war waged between the Elector of Brandenburg and the

But on this occasion I must admit that the Elector of Brandenburg stands alone, a thorn in the eye of all. Yes, all the princes were against me, and wrong became right to prejudice my interests. So they put me under the moral necessity of concluding the Cleves compromise, and I was forced to submit, although I felt it strike like a dagger to my heart."

A loud knock at the door interrupted the Elector in his train of thought. The door was opened, and Conrad von Burgsdorf entered the room, with grave, businesslike air, carrying under his arm a portfolio filled with papers.

"Ah! there comes my lord high chamberlain, privy councilor, and minister," said the Elector pleasantly. "You bring us more work, it seems; so we did not settle everything at our morning session?"

"Your highness," replied Burgsdorf, depositing his portfolio on the table before the Elector, "I certainly bring more work for your grace. You demanded of each of your privy councilors an opinion upon your political situation. Your highness addressed to them the following questions: How is your highness to act in the present juncture of the times? whom are you to trust—against whom to be on your guard? and are you to court an alliance, and if so, with whom?" *

"Yes, such was the purport of my questions," said the Elector, "and I am right curious to get the responses of my sage privy councilors."

"Your highness, their answers are contained in this portfolio. They all arrived during the course of the past day, and I have the honor of handing them to your highness."

Count Palatine of Neuburg in the year 1651 alarmed not merely all Germany, but France, England, Sweden, and Holland as well; even Spain concerned herself in this affair, and all parties put themselves in opposition to the Elector of Brandenburg. Frederick William was therefore forced, in obedience to the Emperor's desire, as well as at the urgent instance of his own States, to submit to a compromise with the Palatinate of Neuburg whereby the *status quo* was maintained. Not until the year 1666, after prolonged contentions, was it finally settled that the Elector of Brandenburg should keep the duchy of Cleves and the countships of Merk and Ravensberg, while the Elector of the Palatinate of Neuburg retained the duchy of Julich and Berg.

* See Droysen, vol. iii, part 2, p. 66.

"I like that, old friend, and together we will examine them. Sit at the table opposite me, open your portfolio, and take out the papers. For the present, however, we shall only take a few of them under consideration. Look first for the communication sent by the Stadtholder of Pomerania, Philip von Horn."

"Here it is, gracious sir," replied Burgsdorf, selecting one from among the six sealed dispatches and handing it to the Elector.

"Open it yourself," was the Elector's order; "look over it, and acquaint me briefly with its leading topics."

"Your highness, here is just such a leading topic," said Burgsdorf, who had unfolded the dispatch and glanced over it.

"Well, let us hear; how runs this leading topic?"

"Your highness, so it runs: 'Your grace, alas! seems at present to be completely isolated, and I know none, either within or without the empire, in whom your Electoral Highness may safely repose confidence. Many have dared to speak injuriously of your Electoral Highness, and to express themselves as highly aggrieved that during the past year you should have ventured to break so dearly bought a peace, thus running the risk of rekindling the flames of a universal war. It has now become quite a generally received maxim that the less the power of him who is feared, the greater is the security of the party threatened. On this ground all, the weak as well as the strong, would only be too glad to see Brandenburg humbled.'"

"You are right," said the Elector quietly; "that is indeed an important point, and gives us a morsel to chew that is rather difficult to digest. Lay that dispatch upon the table, and take up the one sent by Blumenthal, Stadtholder of Halberstadt. Search there likewise for such a leading topic, and I doubt not but that you will find it."

"Ah, your highness!" cried Burgsdorf, after a short pause, during which he had rapidly glanced through the missive, "one leading topic occupies the whole ground here."

"Give us an outline of it, then."

"Here, for example: 'Your Electoral Highness should seek peace above all things. Wherefore, your highness will

do well to abstain from all differences with foreign potentates; to keep within the bounds of a just neutrality; in disputes with members of the body Germanic, to abide by the lawful and impartial decision of his Imperial Majesty, and thus preserve a good conscience. Permit me to recommend the most illustrious example of the Elector Joachim, who throughout the empire gained for himself the reputation of being a *communis pacificator imperii*. For going to war is like using a golden hook to catch a sorry fish: it costs more than it comes to; often, indeed, naught is gained but loss of reputation, or what was ill-gotten must be kept by new wars, and to pay one's supporters consumes more than all won, for——'"

"Enough!" interposed the Elector impatiently; "lay that dispatch aside. I shall hereafter read it to an end. Now take Conrad von Burgsdorf's representation in hand, and read to me the views unfolded by my faithful, deserving, and prudent minister, privy councilor, and lord high chamberlain."

"Your highness!" cried Burgsdorf, laughing, "my views have not been committed to paper, but are written in my head and heart alone. You well know, my much-loved lord and Elector, that writing is not my forte, and my weak old fingers are so stiff and unskilled that a goose quill is crushed by them in no time, because they fancy it is a sword, such as they have been accustomed to handle. I therefore beg your gracious permission to impart my advice unceremoniously by word of mouth."

"Well, do so, you lazy old fellow," said the Elector, smiling. "Give us your opinion; but of this, too, only the most important; and if there are any hard bits, you are the man to swallow them for the present, and furnish them ample harbor in that broad, capacious chest of yours."

"With your leave, then, most gracious sir," said Burgsdorf, clearing his throat, "my humble opinion is that it is of supreme importance to your highness to seek to ally yourself with some influential power, whose interest it would be to promote the increasing strength of Brandenburg, not so much out of tender inclination as for its own sake, hoping, perhaps, to use the mighty Elector as a bulwark against other powerful enemies. But who, I now ask myself—who can be such

an ally, whose interests are identical with those of Brandenburg? Most assuredly it is not the Emperor of Germany, for the greater the aggrandizement of the Elector of Brandenburg, the more dangerous becomes he to the Emperor and Austria. The house of Austria is old and the house of Brandenburg new. Now, the old always feel themselves threatened by the young, and look askance at their growth and increase. How, then, can the house of Austria look with other than invidious eyes upon my glorious Elector, upon whose face is stamped the impress of a bold spirit, that can only have been created for noble deeds? Besides, the house of Austria is the upholder of the Catholic party in Germany, and would gladly contribute to the downfall of a prince to whose influence it is justly attributed that at the Peace of Westphalia the Lutherans obtained equal rights with the Catholics. Therefore, all the Catholic princes in Germany, in like manner as his Majesty the Emperor, are opposed to you, and fully agreed that a stop must be put to the further advancement of Brandenburg, if they would not see the cause of their religion prejudiced. The States-General of Holland, too, seem to have little more concern in preserving Brandenburg's friendship, although this is indeed to be wondered at since our most gracious Electress is a Princess of Orange. However, the States of Holland care much less about the relatives of their Stadtholder than about their own interests, and will therefore never be faithful allies, but always adjust their sails to catch the wind best fitted to propel their own ship forward. As to Sweden, your highness well knows the inimical disposition to Brandenburg prevailing there, and that she will profit by every opportunity to fish in troubled waters and possess herself of that part of Pomerania now lost to her. From Poland you can hope for no assistance in times of distress, for——"

"Hark, Burgsdorf!" interposed the Elector. "I need no information as to who are my enemies and opponents. I also know how desirable it is for me to escape from my isolated situation, and to discover those who might help me, and to whom my alliance would be acceptable. Name, therefore, the prince or country where I might hope to obtain such aid?"

Burgsdorf saw not with what a peculiarly searching look

the Elector's eyes were fixed upon him, as if they would read the most secret recesses of his soul. No, Burgsdorf saw it not, for he had bowed his head, and seemed to be deeply pondering his reply to the Elector's question. Then, after a pause, he slowly raised his head, and turned his face, which had assumed a thoughtful expression, to the Elector.

"Your highness," he said, "in my opinion there is only one single power with whom you could advantageously ally yourself."

"Truly, I am rejoiced that among so many powers there is at least one which would not scorn to join hands with the Elector of Brandenburg. Name this power, then, Burgsdorf."

"France, your highness! Yes, in my estimation France is the only power which is interested in your success. For, the more powerful you become, the greater will be your ability to lend aid to France, and the more circumscribed the power of the German Emperor and the other inimically disposed princes. On the other hand, France would be a very profitable ally, for she could protect your possessions on the Rhine against Holland, against the Elector of the Palatinate, and all other enemies, while you might be forced to defend your eastern provinces against Poland or Sweden. Already it is bruited abroad that those two kingdoms are on the point of uniting in an attempt to deprive you of your duchy of Prussia; and against two such foes your highness could with difficulty make head. All the German princes would, however, quietly fold their hands, and with malicious pleasure see you despoiled of a portion of your dominions. France, though, would not suffer Poland or Sweden to receive such an accession of strength; she would energetically support you, with troops as well as subsidies, which in the exhausted condition of your treasury could not be despised."

"And you actually believe that France would be inclined to unite herself more closely with me?" asked the Elector.

"Your highness, I am convinced of it," asseverated Burgsdorf. "France is the sworn foe of the German Emperor, and would not like to see anything better than your alienation from him. I think, indeed, that your highness would be per-

fectly justified in this, for Austria ever looks with an evil eye upon your prosperity, and gladly avails herself of every opportunity of humbling you and stunting your growth. The Emperor, to be sure, behaved right handsomely when you visited him in Prague, but that was only because he had an especial object to attain thereby, and has at other times neglected no opportunity of lording it over you. But if your highness league yourself with France, your enemies will be held in check, and rich France will pay you such immense subsidies that your highness can enlist and maintain a much larger army without having occasion to impose new taxes, and thereby oppressing and burdening your own subjects."

"There is sense and substance in your discourse," said the Elector thoughtfully, "and maybe you are right. Especially would the subsidies come in most fitly and well suit the present state of my finances, which are at a low ebb, nor do I know when the tide will flow in. Since it will not come naturally, we must hasten its approach by artificial means. As to this French alliance, I will take the matter into consideration, and also confer again with you on the subject. The main point now is to devise ways and means for relieving our financial distresses and as much as possible obviating them forever. To this end we must open new channels of trade, and use every exertion to promote manufacturing and industrial pursuits in our midst. For as they increase, so will the ability of the country to stand taxation, and we can then with full right claim what is due for the support of our Government. Our every aim, then, must be directed toward advancing the interests of trade and facilitating commerce. It will therefore be necessary to improve the routes of trade by land and water. One great evil is that the goods shipped upon the Oder can not be immediately transferred to the Spree, but must first be unloaded and conveyed there by land. But this evil must and shall be remedied, and once more I recur to the plan I recently proposed to you, namely, a canal uniting the two rivers, which will furnish an incalculable convenience for internal traffic."

"But for my part, most gracious sir," said Burgsdorf, shrugging his shoulders, "I can only reiterate the sentiments

which I have previously had the honor of unfolding to your highness. Such a canal would be of little use in a land where trade and industry are so perfectly prostrate as with us, for what good would it do to furnish a most expensive convenience to people who can not use it because they have nothing to ship? It would be just like making a poor man the present of a handsome front door furnished with lock and bolt, and saying to him: 'I give you this door that you may lock up your house and secure your property. Now build yourself a fine house, for see, the door is provided already.' But, most gracious sir, you see the poor man can not build, for the very reason that he is poor, and lacks the money indispensable for buying building materials and paying the carpenters. Of what use to him is the door, seeing that he has no house, and of what use to your subjects would be the costly canal, seeing that they have no money wherewith to supply themselves with ships and boats—no money for loading them with goods? At home, therefore, it would do no good, and abroad would serve but to embroil your highness with your neighbors. For, unfortunately, the Oder does not belong to yourself solely, since Stettin pertains to Sweden, and you would surely give umbrage to the Swedes by the digging of this water way." *

"Is this your honest and candid opinion?" asked the Elector, fixing his eyes steadfastly upon Burgsdorf.

"My honest and candid opinion, your highness. I give it according to my inmost convictions, nothing moving me but regard for the interests of my beloved Electoral lord."

"This time, though, your own interests might influence somewhat your opinion," said Frederick William, with a slight shrug of the shoulders. "You might have calculated that if I have such a canal built, uniting the Oder with the Spree, it would cut through your estates, and force you to lose some of them."

"Most gracious sir, I swear that I had not the most remote thought of that!" cried Burgsdorf passionately; "and it is a right bitter grief to my old heart that your highness should suspect me of such a thing. But this does not emanate from

* Burgsdorf's own words. See Droysen, History of Prussian Politics.

your own magnanimous heart; my enemies have been slandering me, for well would it please them so to blacken my character as to deprive me of the confidence and favor of my beloved master. If I had regarded this plan in the light of my own interests, I should have seen that this canal, passing through my estates, would be of great benefit to me. Corn is dearer and finds a better market at Stettin than here in the interior, and it would furnish me means for transporting my corn and selling it at Stettin. But supposing that the canal were detrimental to my estates, I think my whole life has proved my devotion to the Electoral family, and I am sure that in its service I have never spared blood nor fortune."

"Conrad, Conrad, praise not yourself too highly," said the Elector, threatening him with his finger. "You have, indeed, occasionally spilled a little of your blood in our service, for you were always a brave soldier; but as to fortune, of that there is no record. Rather can it not be denied that Conrad von Burgsdorf entered my father's service as quite an inconsiderable and needy nobleman, while now he is a rich and influential lord, much better off than his master. Hush! not a word! let us leave the discussion of these matters, for they are neither pleasant nor profitable to talk about. I am well pleased for my servants to enrich themselves, provided that they do it in a lawful and upright manner, remaining constant in loyalty and of irreproachable life."

"Gracious sir," cried Burgsdorf, starting up, "is that meant as a reproach for me? Does your highness suppose——"

"I suppose," interrupted the Elector, "that you are a very sensitive old chap. It is as if you were suffering from an open wound, and shrieked with pain from a mere finger touch. Enjoy your wealth, my lord high chamberlain, and be as little ashamed of it as I am of my poverty. Better days will come yet."

"Your highness, I am convinced that they will come even now, if you draw near to France. Surely, France would joyfully pay considerable subsidies to so desirable an ally, and relieve you from all distress and embarrassment."

"At all events, I must be sure of that first," said the Elector thoughtfully, "and the first overtures must be made by

France to me. It can not be expected of me that I should approach in humble manner and solicit the friendship of France."

"Your highness, I am certain that France desires nothing of the sort, but would hasten to make the first advances."

"You are certain of it?" repeated the Elector. "I should like to know whence my high chamberlain and privy councilor derives such exact information concerning the dispositions of France?"

"From nobody—oh, certainly from nobody," Burgsdorf made haste to say. "This is only my own humble opinion."

"Let us speak further about this hereafter," said the Elector, rising. "For to-day our consultation is at an end."

The lord high chamberlain arose. "Your highness," he said, gathering together his papers and thrusting them into the portfolio, "I am also commissioned to deliver a message to your grace. Her royal Highness the Princess Hollandine of the Palatinate left my house this morning before daybreak."

"Has she left?" asked the Elector, with an air of lively interest.

"She has left my house, your highness, and these were her last words: 'Say to the Elector, my honored cousin, that I must leave your house without bidding his highness farewell. Tell him I could bear everything better than taking leave of him, and would count no sacrifice as so severe. Since the term for my sojourn here has expired, I depart at once.'"

"Well, and what else?" asked the Elector, as Burgsdorf now kept silence.

"She said nothing else, your highness, but entered her heavily loaded carriage and drove off, quite alone and unattended, for she had dispatched her servants the evening before with the great baggage wagon for Frankfort-on-the-Main."

"And whither did the Princess journey herself?"

"That, most gracious sir, her royal highness did not tell me. I only know that she went in the direction of Spandow."

"It is well," said the Elector. "The Princess certainly made a judicious selection, and fixed upon her choice with delicate tact. I thank you for having so hospitably enter-

tained my dear cousin, and especially for having preserved so inviolable a silence. For I believe no one had an idea of the Princess's presence here, but all believed that it was really Madame von Kanitz who had taken up her lodgings at her father's house."

"Your highness, there was very little to talk about, for during all the while I received no visitors, and gave my servants strict orders to hold their tongues and not to breathe a word of my daughter's visit. And the fellows stand mightily in awe of me, so that I feel confident of their silence. But I must own to your highness that I feel very sad on account of the fair Princess's departure, and my house looks as if it had suddenly become empty and desolate. It was so refreshing and delightful to look upon this beautiful, distinguished lady, and when she turned her large black eyes upon me, I felt just as if the sun had suddenly risen and made everything bright around me. And what a comfort it was to hear her sweet voice that rang like music, and her laugh that was so merry and clear. But then, I only felt so much the sadder when she wept and grieved so in her chamber last night."

"What? The Princess wept?" asked the Elector, with interest.

"Yes, gracious sir, bitterly and despairingly the whole night long. I could hear her plainly, for her sleeping room was just over mine, and sounds are heard so distinctly in the stillness of night. Besides, this morning it was plain to see from her reddened eyes that she had been weeping. She took evident pains to appear cheerful, and I did not, of course, say that I had overheard her weeping. But she has gone, and my house is once more lonely and dismal as ever."

"And assuredly it is best that she has left your house," said the Elector, with a forced smile. "It is plain to see that old Burgsdorf has fallen quite in love with the beautiful Princess, and the old fool would doubtless have lost his reason if the fairy Wonderful had longer bewitched him with her looks."

"If she were the fairy Wonderful and knew how to charm, your highness, methinks she would have practiced her arts upon another than myself," said Burgsdorf, mournfully shak-

ing his head. "But that is just what charms one in her; she despises all art; and I well know why the Princess wept and wailed, for——"

"If you know," interrupted the Elector, in a severe tone, "keep it to yourself, and let nobody in the world be the wiser for it, not even me. I have a wife, and have nothing to do with the secrets and tears of any other woman, and if the Electress keeps no secret from me I am content."

"Your highness, there is no lady, even though she be such an angel as the Electress, who has not her secrets, and does not keep many a thing from her husband's knowledge!" cried Burgsdorf, shrugging his shoulders.

"See, see!" said the Elector, smiling, "the old woman-hater peeps out from behind the Princess's adorer! What know you of the Electress's secrets?"

"I, your highness," protested Burgsdorf, "I know nothing of them. I can not, alas! boast of possessing her highness's favor. I am nothing but a plain, old fellow, without the fine manners and exquisite polish of Lord Marshal Otto von Schwerin, that perfect man of the world."

"There you are again with your enmity to our lord marshal!" exclaimed the Elector. "Would you again try to poison my mind against him?"

"I hate him, yes, I do hate him!" cried Burgsdorf, with impatient violence. "I despise his mean, hypocritical nature, his courtly manners, his fineness of speech and——"

"And I forbid you any further abuse of this honorable man," cried the Elector indignantly. "I do not want you to be a courtier, but it is highly improper for you to speak against anybody whom we honor with our favor, more especially one so deserving of our confidence as the Marshal Otto von Schwerin. Not a word more, Burgsdorf! Consider my words well, and when you come to-morrow to the meeting of the privy council let me once more find my honest, good-hearted old Burgsdorf. Go now, and forget your melancholy at parting with the vanished fairy.

"I did her injustice, then," said the Elector thoughtfully to himself, as soon as he was again alone. "Ludovicka has gone. She did not make the attempt to remain longer here in

concealment, and, as it seems, could not summon up sufficient resolution to meet her cousin again. Yet, I wish she could have done so, I wish she could have stayed here longer. It was so pleasant a diversion to chat with her. She has so sprightly a mind and such a fiery soul. She has so intimate an acquaintance with the arts and sciences, and her intellectual conversation is ever stimulating you to make the best use of your own faculties, and to bring up from the depths of the spirit your inmost thoughts and clothe them with words. Ah, Ludovicka, Ludovicka! verily you are an enchantress and——

"And it is well that you are gone," he concluded, in a loud voice, at the same time springing up and walking to and fro with hasty steps. "Yes, indeed, it is well that you have gone, for in the end you might have enchanted me, and I might yet have become the victim of your blandishments. I will go to Louisa," he continued, after a short pause. "Yes, I will go to my dear, good Louisa. Oh, when I look into her thoughtful, innocent eyes, then all these little insects left by the enchantress to buzz around my head disappear. For near Louisa all is peace, cheerfulness, and repose."

And the Elector pressed his plumed cap on his brown curly hair and hurriedly left the room.

II.—The Visit.

The Electress Louisa was busy settling accounts and counting over her money when Frederick William entered unannounced and quite unexpected. He had come softly, noiselessly opened the door, and, as his wife did not perceive him, stood still near the door watching her. She had made her toilet for the noonday meal. The light-blue satin dress trimmed with black lace fitted closely to her full, fine figure, and fell in rich folds to her feet. Her luxuriant blonde hair, parted over the forehead, fell down in long curls behind the ears, and at the back of the head its arrangement was perfectly simple, being confined only by a blue ribbon tied in a

bow with long ends. The neck and plump round shoulders were veiled by a lace kerchief of delicate texture, which was secured at the bosom by a small diamond pin. This was the only ornament which the Electress wore to-day, and yet there was something striking and commanding in her whole appearance, and nobody would have ventured to approach this graceful, noble creature without reverence and respect.

The Elector continued to gaze upon her with tender, loving glances. It was as if he would have this pretty picture sink deeply into his soul, that with its bright, pure colors it might cover and efface another and a dazzling image. He could not satisfy himself with looking upon the pleasing form and sweet placid countenance, whose noble profile he could just see.

The Electress sat before her writing table. Before her lay rolls of bills; beside them in separate parcels little heaps of gold and silver pieces. She seemed to have completed her reckoning, for she laid down the pen, and raised her head from the papers.

"Yes," she said, aloud and joyfully, "it will answer. There is again a right handsome surplus, which I can hand over to dear Schwerin! He is my only confidant, and——"

"Hey, hey, Electress! what is that I hear?" cried the Elector, advancing farther into the room.

At his first words the Electress had started, but still her face beamed with joyful surprise; she sprang from her seat and hastened to meet her husband with a tender glance.

"Welcome, my lord and husband," she said, giving him her two hands—"welcome, my friend and best beloved! How does it happen that you come so soon to-day, you dear piece of impatience," she continued, throwing both arms about his shoulders and looking into his face with eyes sparkling for joy. "When I think that his Highness the Elector is sitting in council with all gravity, I, to imitate his noble example, seat myself at my table and work and calculate——"

"And calculate that you have a handsome surplus," interrupted the Elector, smiling—"a handsome surplus, which you will give to dear Schwerin, your only confidant. Electress, I call you to account, I want to know the meaning of

this, and how your grace can presume to have any other confidant than your husband?"

"Ask not to know, Frederick, for I can not tell you," replied the Electress coaxingly; and with her little white hand tenderly stroking her husband's manly sunburnt cheeks.

"You can not tell me, Louisa?" asked Frederick William, and his smiling face became a little graver. "You actually have a secret from me?"

"Yes," said she nodding, and looking at him affectionately with her large blue eyes. "Yes, I have a secret from you, Frederick."

"And Otto von Schwerin knows it?"

"He knows it, but is silent, and I can rely upon his discretion. Ask no more now, Frederick, for I can tell you nothing more, a solemn promise binding me. But when the time comes—and may God in his goodness and mercy speed the day!—then, my darling, you shall learn all, and rejoice with me."

"But meanwhile Otto von Schwerin remains your only confidant," said the Elector, in tones somewhat harsh.

Louisa Henrietta looked up quite amazed. "How strangely you said that, and why do you look so grave all at once?" she asked.

"Well, Electress, I own that I do think it somewhat singular that there are secrets which I may not learn from you, but which, nevertheless, you share with Otto von Schwerin. You assume, then, that I am of a gentle, quiet temperament, and not at all capable of being jealous?"

The Electress started, and a glowing blush suffused her cheeks.

"Jealous?" she said, astonished—"could you be jealous?"

"And why not, pray?" asked the Elector, a little provoked. "You keep secrets from me which another man knows. You intrust Herr Otto von Schwerin with things which you refuse to tell me. I ask you, Electress, why should I not be jealous?"

"I will tell you why, Elector," replied the Electress with gentle dignity, while she drew back a step and contemplated

her husband with sorrowful looks—"I will tell you why you should not be jealous: Because you thereby grieve and insult your wife—because you thereby impugn her virtue, her modesty, and, what is worse, doubt her love. If you were jealous, it would prove that you regard her as a hypocrite, pretending to a love she does not feel, one light-minded enough to forget her bounden duties and her plighted troth."

"But, Louisa, you take the thing too seriously," said Frederick William, whose momentary irritation had already vanished. "Good heavens! is it not very natural that a man who loves his wife should be jealous of every mark of favor which she bestows upon another? Is it not even very flattering to a lady who has been already married six years that her husband is still jealous of her?"

"No, it is not flattering, but painful," sorrowfully replied the Electress. "Wedded love is like a holy gospel, which we must not read with doubting or mocking thoughts, but with pious confidence and a firm belief in its truth."

"And I do, Louisa, indeed I do," said the Elector cordially, offering his hand to his wife. "I have a firm, unshaken confidence in you. I say with an abiding, joyful conviction that you are my better self, and that what you do is good, and what you wish is right. For never, that I know, will your heart betray its trust—never will Louisa Henrietta cease to love her husband. Not that he is at all deserving of this love; on the contrary, he is a right churlish and wicked fellow, in his unjustifiable passionateness occasionally mistaking heaven itself for hell and the angel at his side for an ordinary worldly woman. But as soon as passion has flown away and his eye again is clouded, he recognizes his error, humbly and penitently suing for pardon. Louisa, will you be merciful instead of just? Will you forgive your hasty, impetuous husband?"

The Elector bent one knee before his wife, and looked up at her with folded hands and pleading looks. The Electress made haste to hold out her hand and raise him with gentle force.

"Come, my husband," she said, nodding kindly, "sit down at my writing table, and permit me to lay before you a few

papers and documents. You shall now know the secret, and I will impart something to you that——"

"Louisa," quickly interposed the Elector, "I demand as a proof of your forgiveness that you do not ask me to look at one of these papers or documents, or make me acquainted with your secret. I do not want to know it, and you would really mortify me by insisting upon telling me, for then I should feel that you did not really forgive me, but were still angry with me."

"I am no longer angry with you, Frederick," said the Electress fondly, "and I thank you heartily for being content without knowing my secret, for there is one thing which weighs upon my heart—a solemn promise made in a trying hour, and——"

"Hush, hush!" cried the Elector, "would you now grow talkative and let your secret out? I will not hear a word about it, my Louisa, and not a word more shall be said on the subject. But I would like to discuss one point with the Electress, since her grace seems to consider jealousy not only as wrong but as injurious. I rather think that there can be no true love without jealousy, and that only cold, indifferent hearts or arrogant fools inflated with their own self-importance are incapable of jealousy. I, my sweetest, suffered such severe qualms of this baneful malady in the Chinese Pavilion a certain evening at The Hague that I verily believe a little of this poison still lurks within my heart, and that you will probably never be able to eradicate it. And you, Louisa, now make candid confession. Tell me, have you never been jealous?"

"If you demand of me a candid answer," replied the Electress, with downcast eyes, "well, then, I must own that there have been times when I have been right jealous, when jealousy pierced my heart like a dagger and left me no repose night or day. But, my grand inquisitor of a husband, that was before my marriage, long before, for when you told me that evening at the Chinese Pavilion that you loved me, all at once the dagger fell at my feet, and my heart was healed and full of happiness and bliss."

"And has it remained so ever since, Louisa?" asked the

Elector, with agitation. "Have you never been jealous again?"

The Electress did not reply immediately, but with a little embarrassment looked down upon the floor. Then she slowly raised her head once more and with a soft smile met the Elector's eye, which was steadfastly fixed upon her. "I have been jealous since then, too, but not of a woman."

"Not of a woman? Of whom else, then, my little simpleton?"

"I will make confession to you, Frederick, for you requested me to do so candidly and honestly. I have been and still am jealous of——"

"Well, why do you hesitate, Louisa? Speak out. Name your rival!"

"Frederick, it is your lord high chamberlain, Conrad von Burgsdorf."

The Elector started and closely scrutinized the Electress's face. Could her words have a hidden meaning? Did Louisa in this way intend to give him to understand that she knew who was the lady that had been staying at Burgsdorf's house? But no; the Electress's countenance was artless and open; no trace of bitterness or desperate earnestness was discernible there; and with soft, timid voice she continued: "Yes, Frederick, I owe to you that I am jealous of this man, and, however much I struggle against it, and however often I repeat to myself that it is wrong, yea, even a crime, I can not overcome my aversion to him, and I confess that it right often makes me unhappy and always angry with myself."

"Poor child!" said the Elector, drawing near to his wife and pressing her head against his breast, as if he would there cradle her and shelter her from all griefs—"poor child! And why do you dislike our old Burgsdorf so much, and what is it that you so particularly object to in him?"

"I dislike his coarse nature, his uncouth manners!" cried the Electress with unwonted vehemence. "He boasts of his evil doings, and shamelessly glories in his excesses—his drinking and his life of dissipation. At the same time that he prides himself on these things he ridicules good manners and a more refined deportment, seeking to bring derision upon those

who are not like himself, who do not beat on the table with their fists, curse, and bet. He is ever vaunting his mad feats in drinking as most commendable proofs of his cleverness."

"True," said the Elector, smiling, "he has bad manners and is no fine gentleman, but you must consider that he is a man of an earlier period, when this court was not particularly refined. He neither saw nor heard of anything better in his youthful days, and we must make allowances for him if in old age he preserves the rude manners which he learned in his youth."

"It is just that which provokes me so much in him!" cried the Electress, with warmth. "That is not his case, it is not from ignorance, but through design, that he exhibits so much rudeness and want of polish. He thereby lays claim to peculiar privileges, and, instead of being ashamed of his offenses against good breeding, makes a boast of them, and exhorts the young noblemen to imitate his example and adhere to the old malpractices, which he terms the good old ways. And all this," continued the Electress, waxing still warmer—"all this I could pardon in him and overlook, if I could only regard him as an honest man and a faithful servant to his master."

"What, Louisa?" asked the Elector. "You, who are always so gentle and indulgent, ever seeking to palliate men's faults, would you accuse and cast aspersions upon old Conrad von Burgsdorf, who for more than twenty years has been the faithful servant of our house and family?"

"God forgive my sin if I do him injustice," continued the Electress, "but I can not persuade myself that he is really a devoted servant of his Elector. On the other hand, I am convinced that he has an eye only for his own interests, and that all he does is only calculated to gratify his own ambition and avarice."

"It is very true," said the Elector thoughtfully, "you have exactly hit upon his weak points, and I admire your quick-sightedness. Yes, it is not to be denied that Burgsdorf is both an ambitious and an avaricious man, of which, alas! we have had manifold experiences. Often has he testified chagrin and pique if we elevated any other person to rank or dignity, and has given us such uncomfortable evidence of his ill humor and

discontent that, in order to coax him back to his wonted good humor, we have felt constrained to propitiate him with rich presents. How often, too, has he returned from missions to foreign courts with immense sums of money, which it was possible that he had obtained by way of reward or bribery." *

"And still, Frederick!" cried the Electress, eagerly, "still, although you know all that, you confide in him, and attach value to his counsels and judgment!"

"I have hitherto done so because, in spite of all his faults and weaknesses, I was convinced of his devotion and fidelity, and because he belonged to the inventory which I had inherited from my father. Moreover, Burgsdorf is a clever business man, a rapid worker, accomplishing more in a day than the rest of the privy councilors in two. I can rely upon an abstract or report made by him, and there is a large party here in the Mark who follow wherever he leads and vote just as Burgsdorf chooses. I must show indulgence to the Sovereign States and yield to their prejudices, for they are often obstinate and untoward, and then I stand in need of such a mediator as Burgsdorf."

"But who knows how often he complicates matters instead of acting as mediator!" exclaimed the Electress quickly —"how often, by his haughty, supercilious manners, he sows discord merely to boast afterward that it was he who brought about a reconciliation! Forgive me, Frederick, for censuring your favorite so severely, for that he is your favorite I well know. He has more influence over you than any one else, more than my mother even, to say nothing of myself!"

"Why!" cried Frederick William, "it seems from your discourse that very many have influence over me, and that the Elector is dependent for his judgment and opinions upon many different voices. And assuredly I have given you cause to entertain such views. It belongs to my nature as well as principles to mistrust my own judgment, and gladly harken to what my councilors and other experienced persons say upon subjects which engage my attention. I also often require my privy councilors to give me their views upon knotty political questions in writing. I find this a very useful means of find-

* *Vide* Droysen, History of Prussian Politics, vol. iii, part 3, p. 68.

ing out the individual sentiments of each, and making him give a clear statement of his views. Besides, one may learn of everybody, and I am a pupil eager to improve, that I may hereafter become an adept in statesmanship, and rule my country and people in accordance with my own principles and understanding. But whoever thinks that I may be made the creature of foreign domination is greatly mistaken, and will hereafter find out that he has deceived himself with regard to my character. It is true that hitherto Burgsdorf has occupied a very influential and important position near my person. He is my Prime Minister, and I am attached to him from habit and for the sake of old memories. He carried me in his arms when I was yet a child, fondling and playing with me like a father; he became afterward my instructor in riding, fencing, and other knightly exercises, and always protected me against my father's favorite, the wicked Count Schwarzenberg. To him, Conrad von Burgsdorf, I owe it that I was sent to Holland to prosecute my studies. He carried the point with my father in opposition to Schwarzenberg, who would have preferred bringing me up here in ignorance and dependence, or would have found some other means of thrusting me aside. As far back as my memory reaches Burgsdorf has always stood to me in the relation of a fatherly friend, which would but make bitterer now the pain of discovering him to be a traitor and unworthy of my confidence. But believe me that I have ever an open eye and an attentive ear, and that, however careless I may at times appear, nothing escapes me. And when I must, I shall not hesitate to remember that precept of holy writ, 'If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee.' Trust me, I should act accordingly, although I can not conceal that it would be a trying experience through which to pass, and like tearing up by the roots a plant which I had nurtured and tended with loving care. And now, my dearest Louisa, since I have revealed to you right minutely and exactly my most secret thoughts and feelings, be once more of glad heart and look forward courageously to whatever may come. But be assured of this, that you have no cause to be jealous of Burgsdorf, and that he would never dare to direct the venom of his tongue against

my best beloved, for at that selfsame moment he were a lost man, and he is much too prudent not to know that, and to act accordingly. Give me your hand, Louisa, and let us be one in heart, and feel mutually that no human being has power to cloud the clear sky of our happiness or shake our confidence in and love for one another by base whispers and insinuations."

"Here is my hand, Frederick," cried the Electress, with radiant looks. "Joyfully and faithfully will I stand at your side in evil as well as in good report. With your love there is nothing that I could not bear; and," she continued, with agitated voice and blanching cheek, "if you forgive me for bringing to your house no heir, to your fatherly heart no son, I, too, will acquiesce and leave it with God either to bless me and grant my fervent wishes or to refuse and let me wither away as a decaying tree, which bears neither blossom nor fruit."

"A bad and inapt comparison, Louisa!" cried the Elector, smiling. "Lift up your head, my dearest, look me right steadily in the eyes, and say what you see reflected in them."

"My own image, as clearly as in a mirror," said the Electress, smiling.

"Well, say does this image resemble a decaying tree? Is it not rather a beautiful flower, that may bloom for many a summer day without anxiety as to whether it will bring forth fruit in autumn?"

"My hope is in God," said Louisa, piously folding her hands together, "and Jesus is my trust."

At this instant the door opened and the Electress's chamberlain entered.

"I beg pardon, your highness," he said, "for venturing to disturb you. But a distinguished visitor has just arrived and desires to be conducted to your highness without delay."

"Who is it?" asked the Electress eagerly. "O Frederick! it is possible that my mother has come at last, and means to surprise us! Come, come, let us hasten to meet her!"

The Electress took her husband's arm and wished to go quickly forward. But Frederick William detained her. "Let us hear more first, Electress. Say, Krokow, who is the visitor?"

"Most gracious sir, I do not know. It is a lady, tolerably

young and very pretty, with fiery black eyes and black hair. She drove up to the castle in a great traveling carriage, with much baggage but few servants. The porter summoned me, and when I took the liberty of asking the lady her name, she replied that it did not at all concern me to know it. I must only conduct her to her grace with all privacy. I did not know what reply to make, and was quite at a loss what to do. But the lady required me to give her my arm and help her to alight, and I could do nothing less than obey. Then she reiterated her orders to be led forthwith to her highness, and when I still stood hesitating, she crossed the vestibule and mounted the great staircase before me, as if she were perfectly acquainted with the place."

"And here I am!" said a clear, laughing voice behind them; and when the Electress turned round, she saw standing in the open door a lady of tall, commanding stature, clad in a simple black traveling dress. She had thrown back her veil, displaying a bright smiling countenance with glowing black eyes. The Electress contemplated the fair stranger with embarrassed mien, and in her confusion did not think of going to meet her. "Yes, here I am," repeated the lady, "and I now request my dear cousin Louisa Henrietta either to bid me welcome or dismiss me immediately, for my carriage still stands in the yard below, and I shall depart without delay if my visit is at all unpleasant to you."

"I am pleased, certainly," said the Electress, "but——"

"But you do not know, *ma chère cousine*, who I am. And there stands my other dear cousin, looking as much bewildered and perplexed as if he had never seen me in his life. Yes, indeed, many years have elapsed since we saw each other for the last time, Elector Frederick William. You were then a little, enthusiastic Electoral Prince and I a foolish, passionate young girl. But, dear me, have I actually altered so dreadfully since then that neither of you recognizes me? Louisa, have you forgotten my riding you in the little carriage drawn by two goats with gilded horns in the grounds at Bosch? and——"

"It is Cousin Ludovicka," exclaimed the Electress, joyfully—"yes, to be sure, it is Cousin Ludovicka Hollandine!"

"It is the lost child returning home to her family!" cried the Princess. Extending both arms to the Electress, she asked with gushing tears: "Will you receive the lost as one found again, Louisa? Shall I no longer have to wander an exile in a foreign land?"

"No, that you shall not, Ludovicka. Welcome, heartily welcome!" cried the Electress, who took the Princess in her arms and imprinted a warm kiss upon her lips.

Disconcerted and irresolute, the Elector stood in the background, gazing upon the lovely group. His impulse was to snatch his wife from the Princess's embrace, to say to her: "She is an intriguer! She deceives you, Louisa!" And yet, had he a right to do so? Had he not given the Princess his solemn promise not to betray to anybody in the world the secret of her sojourn at Burgsdorf's? Had he not in return stipulated that Ludovicka should either take her departure in eight days or present herself openly before her cousin, the Electress? And had not Ludovicka now complied with his conditions? Had she not set off at the expiration of the eight days and now come voluntarily to fulfill her part of the engagement? Must he not, therefore, also keep his word and guard her secret? Would it not be a breach of faith to betray her now, when she came with all humility to place herself under her cousin's protection? Oh! he well knew what it had cost that proud, stubborn heart to gain such a victory over self, with what struggles she had wrung this sacrifice from her pride. Old Burgsdorf had told him how she had wept the livelong night, and how sad she had been when early this morning she had bidden him farewell. No, it was impossible. He durst not betray her. He durst not be false to his oath. She had fulfilled all requirements, and he had no right to abuse her confidence. She was there, and he could not drive her from his house after the Electress had bidden her welcome.

As soon as the Elector had come to this conclusion he stepped forward and slowly approached the two cousins, who stood hand in hand, conversing in an undertone.

"Let me go, Louisa," the Princess was just whispering. "You see he will not speak to me; it is disagreeable for him to see me here; let me go."

And Ludovicka made a movement as if to turn away. But the Electress held her fast, and with pleading looks turned to her husband.

"Frederick," she said, "Ludovicka wants to go away, because you do not bid her welcome. I have, however, begged her to stay."

"And you were right to do so, my dear Louisa," cried the Elector pleasantly, at the same time quickening his pace and offering his hand to the Princess. "Welcome, Princess Ludovicka Hollandine," he said, almost with solemnity. "May your going out and coming in be blessed to this house! My well-beloved wife has bidden you welcome. She has such a true, pious disposition she can not be recreant to the religion of past memories, but preserves it sacred and pure in the sanctuary of her breast. Let us two, then, follow her fine example, and dedicate ourselves with pious and earnest feelings to the same faith, and keep it with truth and honesty so long as we live."

"Yes, that we will!" cried Ludovicka, with an appearance of deep emotion. "Permit me to tarry with you a few days, and prepare myself for the great step which I have in view. I count upon you for aid in this, Louisa. I hope that your soft, tender heart will open to me, and give me a little love and sympathy, for if so, then you can intercede for me with my mother and brothers and sisters, that they may open their arms to me and once more take me to their hearts."

"Would you return to The Hague? To our family?" asked the Electress, with a somewhat embarrassed mien, for she well knew how little sympathy the Princess Ludovicka would find at The Hague, how irksome her presence would be to Princess Amelia, how unseasonable even to her own mother.

"Yes," replied the Princess, "I would go to my friends, but not to remain with them. I only wish to make my peace with them and my own heart before saying farewell to the world forever. This, Louisa, is my last experience of the world, my last earthly business, and when it is accomplished, when I have become reconciled to my family, received my mother's blessing and the salutation of peace from all my dear

ones, then will my pilgrimage be ended, and I shall return to France to sever all worldly ties by going into a convent. Sir Elector," continued the Princess, turning with a sad smile to Frederick William, "I would like to make a confession to my dear cousin, your wife, this very hour, the first of our meeting. She shall learn from me what you apparently in the chivalry of your noble nature have concealed from her. For I know that you can never have been guilty of the crime of betraying a lady's secret. Am I not right, cousin?—you have not done and would not do such a thing?"

The Elector well understood the hidden meaning of her question, and met the Princess's inquiring glance with firm and tranquil aspect.

"Your confidence is not misplaced," he said.

The Princess nodded her head slightly, as if in thanks.

"Then you shall learn my secret from myself, Louisa," she said, seizing the Electress's hand and drawing her tenderly toward herself. "I will tell you all, cousin; I would confess to you! There was a time, Louisa—ah! long since vanished!—when I was a young, innocent, and beautiful girl, such as you were when your husband married you. Then came to The Hague the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg. You do not know it, for you were then nothing but a child."

"Oh, but I do know," said the Electress, casting a smiling glance at her husband. "I know it very well, for, child as I was, I learned even then to love my cousin, and from that time he became the ideal of my imagination."

"If you as a child loved him," continued the Princess, "you may imagine that I, the ardent imaginative girl of sixteen—I loved him, and longed for nothing so much as to belong to him, to become his wife. Perhaps it was my love which attracted him as the magnet does the steel; enough, we loved one another, and were to have been married. But I was right in saying that my love was the stronger, that it was like the magnet which attracts the steel. At the decisive moment the magnet suddenly lost its power and the steel dropped off. He rejected me."

"Frederick!" cried the Electress, and in spite of herself a ray as of sunshine flitted across her face—"Frederick, is that

true? Did you have the dreadful courage to reject your beautiful, fascinating cousin?"

"Yes," quickly resumed the Princess, without allowing the Elector time to answer—"yes, he did have that dreadful courage, and only look at him now, Louisa, I verily believe he is glad of it to-day. Well, I can hardly blame him, for without that courage he would not be now the husband of my sweet cousin Louisa Henrietta. Yes, he scorned me; he did not love me ardently, passionately, as I chose to be loved. It came to an explanation, to a rupture, and we parted. I with hatred and indignation rankling in my heart, he with coolness and indifference."

"And I, my dear Ludovicka," said the Electress, with fervor—"I beg your pardon for the Electoral Prince, pardon for his cruelty and fickleness, for——"

"Not so fast, Electress," interposed her husband, smiling. "Beg not too much. The Princess has forgotten one thing, and, since she is disposed to confess, let her tell all, that I may not appear to you in the light of a frivolous, inconstant boy. Princess Ludovicka, you told the Electress that I rejected your hand, will you have the goodness to explain the circumstances which induced me to take such a step?"

"Why, yes," replied the Princess; "I forgot that. We could not obtain our parent's consent to our union. We would have been therefore compelled to abscond and marry in secret. Now, unexpected aid was proffered. The French ambassador offered us, in his Sovereign's name, an asylum upon French soil; he declared himself ready to pay considerable subsidies to the Electoral Prince provided that the latter would pledge himself to remain the friend and ally of the King of France when he should become Elector."

"Say, rather, to become the servant, the vassal of France!" cried the Elector. "This I could not, durst not consent to. My political conscience revolted against it and made silent the feelings of my heart, and I must acknowledge that I do not repent of it to-day, but would act just as I did then."

"You see, cousin," said Ludovicka, smiling, "he does not repent; he is incorrigible. And, indeed, he has more cause to be content with his course to-day than at that time, for

he now sees you at my side. You are young and beautiful, you are a lovely, fascinating creature, and I—— Cousin, you may now give me your hand and with a dutiful kiss ask pardon for your earlier offenses, without giving my fair cousin the least ground for being jealous!"

"No!" cried the Electress, with a smiling glance at her husband—"no, I am not jealous! Come, Frederick, accept our dear cousin's overture toward a reconciliation, kiss her hand, and beg her to stay with us as long as she may find it agreeable so to do. Tell her that we feel glad of the opportunity of entertaining so beloved a guest."

"The Princess has just heard this from your lips, sounding much sweeter and better than from mine," replied the Elector. But he took the hand held out to him by the Princess, and pressed it to his lips.

"And now," said the Electress cheerfully—"now that all has been explained and cleared up, permit me, my dear cousin, to make a few household arrangements for your comfort and to give my instructions to the steward in person. Undoubtedly he is already in the antechamber awaiting my orders. Excuse me, therefore, for a few minutes."

She nodded smilingly at the Princess and hastened through the apartment to the antechamber. The Elector was alone with her. They stood regarding each other with grave, melancholy looks.

"You see, Frederick William," said Ludovicka, her voice slightly quivering, "I have obeyed your injunction, and come to present myself to your wife."

"Yes," replied he gloomily, "but you are responsible, Ludovicka, for my having to-day for the first time concealed the truth from my wife."

"What?" cried she bitterly. "Was not this sacrifice great enough? Could you ask it of me that I should tell your wife that I had come here only to see you, to take leave of you? O Frederick! you have indeed a cruel heart, and would deepen my humiliation!"

"No," said he, slowly shaking his head, "I have not a cruel heart. I am only cautious and conscientious!"

"And yet you desire this last humiliation?" said she

softly. "I am to tell your wife that I have already spent some days here in concealment; that at my request you have daily visited me; and that good old Burgsdorf took me into his house under an assumed name? Must I acknowledge all this to her?"

"No," answered the Elector hastily—"no. Let the matter rest as it stands. The Electress is to know nothing of these things. It is better so, perhaps. And now, Ludovicka Hollandine," he continued, offering her both hands—"now welcome to my house, to my home. You have made a great sacrifice for my sake, and I thank you for it. By so doing you will make my life richer by a few bright and happy days, and shed some sunshine in this gray, gloomy old castle."

At this moment the Electress re-entered the room, and, seeing the two standing thus hand in hand and looking kindly at one another, she nodded to them with a cheerful smile.

"That is right—I like that!" she cried. "Peace be among us all, peace and love! And now come, dear cousin, give me your arm and allow me to conduct you myself to your own apartments, that you may rest and refresh yourself. In an hour's time permit the Elector to hand you down to dinner."

She offered the Princess her arm, while the Elector hastened to open the doors for them, and then took his leave.

"Well, here I am happily installed," said Ludovicka to herself, surveying the vast chamber with dingy little windows into which she had just been ushered. "It must be admitted," she continued, slowly sinking into one of the high-backed chairs, covered with velvet yellow with age—"it must be admitted that it is not too splendid here, and I almost think I was lodged more elegantly and pleasantly at my old Burgsdorf's than here in the Electoral mansion. How faded is the velvet of this furniture, how old-fashioned its style, and how wretchedly defaced is the papering with which the walls are hung! But let us see how the dressing room is furnished."

She got up briskly from her armchair, crossed the boudoir, and pushed open the low brown door which led into the adjoining apartment.

It was fitted up in a similar manner. The walls were hung with the same simple papering, the velvet covers on the furni-

ture was faded, the golden decorations tarnished and moldy, the windows dim with their little panes of glass framed in lead, through which, however, penetrated the scorching rays of the sun. Beneath a canopy of faded velvet was a small, simple bed, and between the windows a toilet table furnished meanly and simply, without the least luxury.

The Princess's keen eyes took all this in at a rapid glance, and then fastened upon one spot in the ceiling which excited her particular attention. This ceiling, which was very grotesquely painted and represented a cloudy sky, from which looked out several smiling genii, was at this place interrupted in a violent way. The sky was here nailed up with boards, and the angels' heads near the boards were lost in an indistinguishable medley of colors.

"I should like to know what this signifies," whispered the Princess, while her eyes fell from the ceiling to the floor, which was covered with a thick woolen carpet. Here, too, the colors were obliterated, and had run into one another, the floor seeming to have been damaged by some accident. And as the Princess surveyed all this with a mocking smile, and was puzzling herself to conjecture the cause of this dilapidation, a small side door in the sleeping room opened, and the Electoral steward made his appearance, followed by a lackey, bearing a large earthen bowl.

"I beg your pardon," said the steward, with a low bow. "I am sorry to disturb you, but it is just beginning to rain, and we must therefore place a vessel under this leak. The new chambers, alas! are not ready, and your highness will therefore have to content yourself with the Duchess of Brunswick's suite of apartments. But who would have thought that such a storm would have blown up?"

He helped the lackey to place the great earthen dish just under that part of the ceiling which was boarded up, and then retired with reverential obeisances.

Princess Ludovicka looked with comic seriousness upon the brown earthen bowl, and as the rain, which was now beating furiously against the window panes, began also to penetrate the ceiling and trickle drop by drop into the bowl, she laughed aloud.

"I actually believe this grim old Electoral castle is weeping because I have forced my way in," she whispered. "The steward may be right: a storm is blowing up. I am the tempest; I am the lightning which is to put everything here in flames; I am the fire which is to lay everything here in ashes. Weep, weep, old rumbling Electoral castle! Yes, yes, the tempest is brewing, and finely shall it thunder and lighten! Weep on! I, too, wept when he thrust me from him; wringing my hands I besought him, and he had the cruel courage to turn from me. Now I shall take my revenge, my fiery, fierce revenge!"

Just at this instant a streak of lightning flashed through the apartment, followed by such a loud, majestic peal of thunder that the windows jarred and rattled.

Ludovicka lifted up both arms, and her countenance grew more animated. "Hail to you, angry voice of Jove!" she cried. "I greet you and rejoice in you! Send me one of thy bolts, as thou didst once to Theseus, that I may take vengeance upon these two, who are to blame for my ruin, who have on their consciences the loss of my virtue, and my shame, my transgressions and humiliations! *He* scorned me and drove me to take refuge in that wild, licentious life. *She* has taken the place which belongs to me, with which he solemnly swore to endow me. I ought to be Electress of Brandenburg! I should be the wife of this handsome, engaging Elector! Help me, O Jupiter! that I may revenge myself upon them both! Speak to me with the voice of thy majestic thunderbolts. Say that thou wilt grant my prayer!"

Still she stood with uplifted arms, her large, glowing eyes gazing into the stormy sky. Now another vivid flash, enveloping her as in a golden cloud; a loud and long-continued peal of thunder followed. A smile passed lightly over her features, she let her arms drop, and, proudly throwing back her head, whispered: "I shall have my revenge. He shall love me!"

III.—The Execution.

The eight days had passed, and Gabriel Nietzel had not protested against the sentence which condemned him to death. He had not even sought the Elector's pardon, although Frederick William had several times sent his own physician to the prison to urge him to present a written petition to that effect. But Gabriel had only replied to this invitation by silently shaking his head, and when, on his last mission, the doctor had pressed it upon him with impatience, he had said almost indignantly: "I have only one favor to ask of the Elector, and that is that he will trouble himself no more about me, but allow me undisturbed to go on my way to death. This is now my sole wish. Say so to the Elector, and farewell!"

But this was the very favor which Frederick William was unwilling to grant the wretched man; he would save him at any price. He felt as if a sacred bond linked him to the poor beggar, as if it would be a grief to his own soul to burst asunder this bond; his heart seemed to be drawn with wondrous sympathy toward this pitiable man, and he had a feeling of reverential admiration for the heroism with which the heavily laden, repentant sinner had imposed upon himself such severe penance for his crime and guilt.

"I *will* save him!" cried the Elector quite aloud, as he once more, on this the eighth day after the pronouncing of the sentence, read over the warrant of death which had been issued against the "beggar Claus," and to which he was to-day to affix his signature. "I *will* save Claus, and preserve my soul from incurring the heavy guilt of having condemned an innocent, repentant man. They say that it does not become me to pardon in opposition to the will of the criminal himself. They also maintain that, if the sentence has been given unanimously, it may not and can not be reversed by the simple mandate of the Elector, who must submit to the supremacy of the law like any other citizen. But I will prove to this haughty court, to these proud, assuming magistrates, and these stubborn, obstinate States that I am not merely Elector but Sovereign here—that I am above law, and that

my will is the highest law in my dominions! Gabriel Nietzel shall not die! I *will* not have it."

And the Elector strode through the apartment and opened the door of the little antechamber. "Künkel," he said to the chamberlain in attendance there, "have all my orders been executed?"

"Yes, your Electoral Highness."

"Is all ready?"

"All is ready, most gracious sir! He got here an hour ago, and is now in my room taking some refreshment."

"Good! Bring him here into the antechamber, and when I call let him come in. Did you convey my orders to the director of the prison?"

"Yes, your Electoral Highness, but the director thought he could not comply with the order without the burgomaster's consent—not without a written permit signed by him to the effect that he could release the prisoner from his cell and have him led to your highness."

The Elector turned away to conceal the flush of anger and shame which mounted to his face. "They shall repent of it," he said to himself. "I shall make them repent of daring to oppose me thus at every opportunity. I will bend their haughty necks and break their pride!"

As if this thought had cooled and refreshed him, the Elector turned to his chamberlain with cheerful and composed mien. "Did you go then to the burgomaster with my order?" he asked.

"I did, your Electoral Grace, and the burgomaster made haste to hand me the written order, that the director of the prison should forthwith, in obedience to the Electoral command, send the criminal under a strong guard to the castle as soon as it was dark, since the Elector wished to question him once more."

"Indeed, I owe my thanks to the burgomaster for his condescending support of my orders!" cried the Elector, with a derisive laugh. "I suppose, then, since it is already dark, that the criminal will soon be here?"

"The burgomaster thought it might be done about seven o'clock. It is already a quarter past seven. But it seems to

me I hear carriage wheels. Surely they must be bringing him now."

"It is indeed so," said the Elector, listening. "Light a few more candles in my cabinet, that it may be right bright, and then, when he has come to me, let his guard await his return in the guardroom below. Place some wine and brandy before the men, and encourage them to do honor to the drinkables. When you have well provided for the people below, come up again, and wait with the boy until I call you in. Is he good-looking?"

"Your highness, a youth of such extraordinary beauty I have never before seen. He puts me in mind of the angel Gabriel, so radiant, so innocent, yet manly and——"

"Your Electoral Grace," announced a *valet de chambre*, "the provosts and jailer of the prison are in the antechamber without. They bring a man in irons, whom they say your Electoral Grace has summoned."

"Let them come in," was the Elector's order, "and you, Künkel, go to the young man and bring him here at the right time."

"Your highness shall be obeyed," replied the confidential chamberlain, noiselessly withdrawing.

There was a rattling and clanking before the door of the great antechamber, heavy footsteps approached, the valet threw open the door, and four bearded, sullen-looking men strode in, leading in their midst a poor, pale human being, about whose wasted, emaciated form clanked heavy irons, with which they had chained him hand and foot.

The Elector only cast one fleeting glance upon him, then beckoned to the provosts, who had halted in reverential attitude, and with imperious voice ordered, "Take off his chains!"

They obeyed, and the heavy chains, weighing nearly sixty pounds, fell with a crash to the floor.

"Now be off with you!" cried the Elector, indicating the door by a quick movement of his hand.

"Your Electoral Grace," the first provost ventured to remark, with humble voice—"your Electoral Grace, we are forbidden——"

"Not another word; carry out the chains!" cried the

Elector in thundering tones, and with meek and crestfallen air the provosts slunk away.

Again the Elector and beggar were alone.

With cold, impassive mien Gabriel Nietzel had witnessed the scene just past. With downcast eyes had he entered, not once had he raised them, and neither the Elector's voice nor the taking off of the chains seemed to have made the slightest impression upon him. Only when they loosened the handcuffs and freed his hands was any movement visible in this bowed and shrunken figure. He had folded his hands, and, bowing his head yet deeper upon his breast, had moved his lips as if in secret prayer.

"Gabriel Nietzel," said the Elector.

Gabriel slowly raised his head, and fixed his blue eyes with a singularly tender expression upon Frederick William's noble countenance.

"My dear Elector," he responded softly.

This simple, homely phrase made so deep an impression upon the Elector that tears started to his eyes.

"Do you love me, Gabriel?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Gabriel with clear, full voice, "with my whole heart I love you. You have ever been magnanimous, humane, and benevolent. You have mercifully forgiven me for my shameful crime, and always pitied me. You have protected me against the hatred and envy of the people; you have had compassion upon my pain and my sore affliction."

"And yet I have not been able to protect you against the fearful catastrophe which is now impending!" cried the Elector earnestly, shaking his head. "They have accused you as a murderer and sorcerer!"

"Oh, no, your highness; I accused myself. They only did what they were forced to do: they called me to account for my own accusation."

"And condemned you to death," added the Elector. "It is a disgraceful, childish, and foolish sentence, and you perceive, Gabriel, that I can not ratify it."

"It is a just and well-merited sentence, sir," said Gabriel, "and for the sake of justice and an eternal reward you will have to ratify it. It is written, 'For all they that take the

sword shall perish with the sword,' and again, 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.'"

"But you have shed no blood, Gabriel, neither have you taken the sword!" cried the Elector eagerly. "In an evil hour you allowed yourself to be led astray by a wicked tempter, and were upon the point of committing a crime. But God prevented it."

"Say, rather, Rebecca prevented it!" cried Gabriel, straightening himself up—"say that Rebecca took upon herself the sinner's crime and went for him to death. He, therefore, has not merely one murder upon his conscience, but is responsible for the cruel and terrible death of the noblest and most high-souled of women. And you, sir, would have his crime go unpunished! You can wish that he should fill out the measure of his days like any other honest and virtuous man, and enjoy the blessings of earth, sunshine, and flowers! You would have the criminal go unpunished!"

"No, Gabriel. But a crime that is atoned for I would have pardoned, and mercy extended to the sinner. Gabriel, you have done penance and expiated your guilt."

"In what way, sir?" asked Gabriel quickly. "What have I done to merit forgiveness? Like a broken and useless branch have I hung upon the tree of life, consuming its vigor, and imparting to it no new sap. In idle penance I squandered my days, instead of spending them for others in restless labor, in the sweat of my brow. I thought I had imposed a wonderfully great penance upon myself when I renounced ambition, trod my manly dignity in the dust, and, giving up every right, wandered about as a needy beggar living upon charity. I did, indeed, scourge and torture myself, endured the contempt of men, patiently submitted to their taunts, and, like a dog, picked out of the mud the penny cast at me with mocking jests, feeling withal as if my heart were being slowly lacerated with pin pricks and as if daggers were penetrating my brain. But still, that was not genuine penance, nor genuine humility. True penance, sir, consists in work! If I had labored from morning till night, if I had lived and toiled for the poor, the unfortunate—that would have been the right kind of penance! There are so many sick and suffering, who

in their solitude and distress need attention and consolation. These I should have sought out, these should I have tended. Then I might still have done something, then I might perhaps have again deserved to live, and even to obtain forgiveness before the throne of God. For work is a sacrifice well pleasing to God, and he looks more favorably upon hands that labor than upon hands which are for hours together uplifted in slothful prayer. See, sir," continued Gabriel, recovering breath, "all this I saw clearly for the first time in my dear, solitary dungeon. The black veil which covered my head has been taken away since I found my Rebecca's remains, and my eye sees everything clearly and in its true light."

"Well then, Gabriel, you must perceive that you ought not to die yet," said the Elector in a pressing manner—"that you should do penance now in another sense. You say that work is the only true penance and the only sacrifice well pleasing to God. Go to work, then, Gabriel, and use your hands! I will furnish you with the fitting opportunity. I will send you to my province of Prussia. There at Königsberg nobody knows you, nobody has heard of you. A great asylum has been erected there for the accommodation of two hundred patients. You shall be appointed one of the nurses. There you can live in obscurity and poverty, but as an active member of the community doing penance by your work. Accept my proposition, I beseech you, Gabriel Nietzel. See, I have prepared everything beforehand, made all arrangements for your flight, and taken all needful precautions. Now prove to me that you really love your 'dear Elector,' and care to please me. Flee, Gabriel, flee!"

"Sir, it is impossible!" cried Gabriel, "I can not, I dare not. Through purgatory is the road to paradise, and I must be on my way, for Rebecca is waiting for me. Do you not know that when I found her bones, with her hand she struck my forehead, so that the blood gushed out? Do you not understand that by this token she meant to demand my head and my blood for an atonement? To bid me pass through the purgatory of earthly punishment, to be absolved, and to meet her in eternal peace, eternal love? No, sir, you can not be cruel enough to detain me longer from my Rebecca, or to pro-

long my earthly tortures. I told you that I did not practice the right sort of penance, and that therefore my crimes are still unpunished and unatoned for. Then let me now expiate them by my death, sir, let earthly justice run her course that heavenly justice may stoop to pity me."

"But, man!" cried the Elector earnestly, "do you not feel that it pains me to see you die so? Do you not comprehend that my soul revolts from participating in the guilt of your death?"

"You participate in no guilt, sir," replied Gabriel, shaking his head so that his long, gray locks fluttered about his face. "No, sir; you will rather have acted as my benefactor and redeemer, and I shall bless you with the last breath of my miserable existence."

"Man, are you not to be moved?" cried the Elector bitterly. "Can nothing soften your obduracy or break your mad stubbornness? Yet every creature clings to life, and everybody has something which he loves and from which he would not part!"

"I, sir, have nothing. My love, my hope, my joy lie buried in the grave, whence they will come forth with me at the resurrection."

"And your son. Have you not thought of your son, Gabriel Nietzel?"

A shriek sounded from Gabriel's pale and trembling lips. He clasped both his hands before his face and groaned aloud.

"Sir, oh, sir, why did you do that?" he sighed, slowly letting his hands drop from before his face. "Why did you with cruel hand touch the only chord which still vibrates in my heart?"

"That you may awake from your self-torturing delusion, Gabriel Nietzel!" cried the Elector with strong voice—"that you may feel that your heart is not loosened from earth; that you may be convinced that there are links binding you to earth which you may not sever. The last time you stood before me in this chamber as you do to-day, Gabriel Nietzel, I demanded of the cruel father, who would have sentenced his child to share his penance and his life of beggary, to give me his son that I might have him brought up to be an honest,

virtuous man. And Gabriel Nietzel subdued his feelings, and gave away the last thing he prized on earth—he gave me his son! To-day when for the last time, perhaps, you wait in this room, I shall show the son to this cruel father, that his heart may open to love! Come in!" cried the Elector, with loud voice, and the door of the small antechamber opened, and within it appeared a boy or rather a youth.

Tall and slender was his stature, his hair, once so light and golden had darkened to brown, and fell in heavy ringlets over his neck and shoulders. His face was of that fine, classic oval, such as we see in the statues of the ancients and the paintings of the Italian masters, and wore an expression of innocence and youthful candor. His cheeks were slightly tinged with red, his full, parted lips revealed two rows of the most exquisitely white teeth. The broad, high forehead testified of energy and determination, and from his large, black eyes beamed an exuberance of youthful spirits. These eyes were now fixed with an expression at once reverential and bewildered upon the Elector, and, as the latter did not call him, the boy remained modestly standing at the door. Gabriel Nietzel had not yet seen him, standing with his back to the door, his head sunk upon his breast.

"Gabriel Nietzel!" cried the Elector now, "look around; it is Rebecca's son who stands beside you!"

A tremor shook the poor, bowed, and drooping form. A deadly pallor, and then a glowing red, suffused his cheeks. He was undergoing an inward conflict; he sought to conquer himself and force back the feelings which welled up from his heart, his longings, and his love; but love was stronger than his will. It vanquished him now, so that he turned around; it made him forget everything, his penance, his despair, his repentant tears, even the cruel oath by which he had bound himself never again to salute his son. In spite of himself his arms opened, his lips parted, and with a cry of mingled pain and rapture he rushed to his son, clasped him tightly in his arms, and, leaning his head upon the boy's shoulder, broke forth into loud weeping.

The Elector stood with folded hands, and his eyes, usu-

ally so bright and clear, grew dim. And as he now turned them heavenward, two tears rolled slowly down his cheeks.

"He has a son," he said softly to himself, "a son whom he loves. Oh, my God, how wonderful are thy ways! Thou givest to the beggar what thou deniest to the Prince, and the Prince might envy the beggar!"

Meanwhile, by the energy of his will, Gabriel Nietzel had suppressed his groans and weeping, and again lifted up his head. With the back of his hand he wiped away the tears from his eyes and looked at his son. His countenance actually seemed glorified, and after long, long years for the first time a smile illumined his features.

"It is Rebecca!" he cried. "Those are her eyes! That is her wonderful countenance, that is the sweet smile with which she was wont to cheer and comfort my heart!"

"Yes, it is Rebecca," said the Elector, approaching the two. "My child," he continued, turning to the boy, who with bewildered glances looked sometimes upon Gabriel and sometimes upon the Elector, "speak to your father, tell him that you will love him, and beg him to stay with you."

"Is that man my father?" asked the young man, almost sorrowfully.

"No," cried Gabriel Nietzel vehemently—"no, I am not your father! You know your father was a gentleman, a renowned artist. Your grandfather told you so, when you were with him in Venice. Do you not remember, Raphael?"

"My God!" murmured the boy, as if awakening from a dream. "Raphael! he calls me Raphael! Yes, indeed, they used to call me so before I had found my father Jacob Uhle. And you!" he cried all at once aloud and joyfully—"are not you my good old foster-father? Are not you Claus—my dear, good Claus?"

He laid both hands on Gabriel's shoulders, his large, flaming eyes seeking in that pinched and wasted countenance traces of childhood's memories.

"Yes, it is he," continued the lad. "You have come again at last, and I find you on exactly the same spot where you left me. Oh, I remember all now, I know how much I wept at first when you thrust me from you, Claus, and when

I had to go to a strange place among strange people. At night, when I was alone, I called to you and scolded you, weeping bitterly for longing to see my old Claus. But in the morning I dried my eyes, and did not let any one see my sadness. For Jacob Uhle and his wife were so very kind to me, calling me their child and acting in every respect like tender parents. And then there was so much to be learned, so much to be done, that I soon forgot my sorrow. So years have passed away, and only occasionally do I still think of my good old Claus. But now you are here again, Claus, and I mean to hold fast to you, and not let you run away from me again."

"Well spoken," said the Elector, smiling approvingly upon the boy. "Hold him right fast, that he escape us not again. Tell him that a father has no right to forsake his son, for see, I will now tell you a secret; you——"

"No!" screamed Gabriel, violently thrusting the young man from him—"no, sir, you will not. As a last favor I beseech you to betray no secret to this youth. You would not eternally trouble the serenity of his soul. He has found a father and a family, let him enjoy them. Look at that dear face. Upon it still rests the sunshine of youth. Oh, sir, do not let me be the cause of casting a dark shadow over it!"

"But I," cried the young man, anxiously approaching the Elector, "I implore your highness to tell me the truth. Do it, I beg of you, sir, that I may know who I am. I am strong and sound, both in soul and body, and can bear any secret. Tell me, I beseech you, sir, is this poor, unhappy man my own veritable father? I well know that from childhood up he took care of me, denied himself to supply my wants, cradled me in his arms, carried me when my feet were sore, and begged for me when I hungered. But when I asked him about my father he told me that he had long since been dead and buried, and that I must never think or speak of him. But if Claus is indeed my father, I will love him as a true son, make up to him for what he has done for me, and nurse him in his old age. Your highness, you do not know perhaps that I have finished the course at Joachim's vale. I have passed my examinations in the highest class, and now come to ask you,

sir, to take me into the number of your soldiers, for Father Uhle says you promised that you would."

"And he speaks the truth. You shall be a soldier, and just as soon as you have learned the exercises and regulations you shall belong to my bodyguard."

"I shall learn, and learn quickly, too!" cried the young man joyfully, "and I shall get pay then, shall I not?"

"Yes indeed, that you shall."

"Then I can support old Claus just as he supported me, and care for him and love him. That is to say," continued he with a tender, imploring glance at Claus—"that is to say, if he will accept it from me."

"Claus," asked the Elector, "can you resist any longer? Does your heart make no response?"

"Yes, sir," replied Claus, looking up determinedly, "it responds in the name of his father, who has been long since dead and buried, and this is its response. Hear it, Frederick William Uhle, hear and ponder it well. The man who stands here before you is not worthy of your love and sympathy, and you are not to weep for him, but blot his remembrance from your mind and scatter it to the four winds of heaven, even as shall be soon done with his ashes! The Elector has granted me the last favor of being privileged to see you once more, Frederick William Uhle. I thank you, too, for coming and giving me a loving embrace on my way to death."

"On your way to death?" asked the young man, turning pale. "Good heavens, Claus! You are not the Claus whom they were telling us about as we came along, the Claus——"

"The Claus who is sentenced to death for murder and witchcraft? Yes, I am that Claus!" cried Gabriel, drawing himself up erect gravely and with dignity. "Frederick William Uhle, turn from me and think of me no more, for I do not deserve it!"

"He slanders himself, he speaks what is false!" cried the Elector passionately. "He wants to die, and therefore has accused himself of evil deeds which he did not commit. Short-sighted and foolish men credited his accusation, and condemned him. But I tell you, Frederick William Uhle,

that this man is not guilty of the crimes for which he has been condemned. And therefore pardon him I will, and therefore I had you summoned that you might beg him to accept my pardon and live."

"Claus!" cried the son, seizing him by the hand and looking at him with pleading glances—"Claus, please do not go away from me. I beg you to endure life for my sake, whatever ills it may have brought you. Give me the happiness of having you with me, that by my love I may make amends for all the trouble I ever cost you. What matters it to you that men prosecute and condemn you when the Elector pronounces you innocent, and while I am here to love, venerate, and cherish you, while I——"

"O merciful Father!" burst forth Gabriel, with a shriek of despairing agony. "Will this poor, tortured heart then never break? Must it be racked and tormented to the last minute? Sir, sir, I am suffering, pity me! Sir, sir, the fires of purgatory burn within my heart. Let thus much of grief suffice—pity me!"

And wringing his hands, which were uplifted toward heaven, Gabriel Nietzel threw himself on his knees and looked up with countenance distorted by grief and gestures of entreaty, while his lips murmured detached words of supplication and fervent prayer.

Gradually these, too, were hushed, his features again grew more composed, the restless hands dropped, and he bowed his head upon his breast. Unbroken quiet prevailed now in the Electoral cabinet. The beggar Claus still knelt in silence, while his son stood behind him with folded hands and streaming eyes. Opposite these two, leaning against his writing table, stood the Elector, gazing upon the strange picture with grave and deeply moved countenance.

Suddenly Gabriel Nietzel arose, and his whole manner was tranquil and dignified.

"Sir," he said, turning to the Elector, "permit me to speak once more to this young man here as if he were my son and I his father. Will you tell him to do unquestioningly what I shall ask of him?"

"It shall be done," said the Elector, and, turning to the

youth, he said, "Do what he bids you, and do it without question."

"I will," murmured the youth, with quivering lips.

"My son," said Gabriel Nietzel solemnly, "do you remember that starry night when you slept in my arms with no roof above us but the arching sky?"

"I remember it, Father Claus," replied his son softly.

"I then told you what I shall now repeat: 'Be happy, my child, the blessing of your mother rest upon you, and make of you a good and virtuous man! Think ever of your mother. Honor her in every woman and maiden whom you approach. Pray also for your unhappy father. He departed this life under painful circumstances, pray for him that God may have mercy upon him, and that he may enter into everlasting peace.' Then my son," and something approaching a smile flitted across his face, "then I kissed you and said: 'When you are called to die, may some tender mouth bestow upon you a parting kiss. May you expire beneath a kiss!' For to-day, Frederick William Uhle, this is also my farewell speech. Think of your noble mother and pray for your wretched father! And now, without uttering a word, without even looking at me, turn around, go, and await without the Elector's further commands."

And as the son still lingered, his large eyes fixed in entreaty upon his father, and latter with a proud, imperious movement of the hand waved him toward the door.

"It is my last wish," he cried, "go!"

"Obey him," said the Elector earnestly.

The youth sighed deeply, once more directed his eyes to the face of old Claus, then turned slowly, opened the door, and went out. A low, painful groan escaped Gabriel Nietzel's breast; he pressed both hands upon his heart, as if he would hold it together that it might not break beneath its weight of woe. Then he stepped lightly across to the door through which his son had disappeared, knelt down before it, stooped to the floor, and kissed the threshold which his foot had touched.

"Blessings be upon you, my son," he said softly. "Your father's spirit will be near you and his love will protect you. Blessings be upon you!"

He arose slowly and turned to the Elector.

"Sir," he said in a toneless voice—"sir, I am weary, and long for rest and solitude. Do me one last favor, summon the men to lead me back to my prison."

"You remain immovable, then?" asked the Elector. "You will not accept pardon from me? See, Gabriel, I have prepared everything for your flight. A carriage is waiting to drive you away from this place. In my chamberlain's room are clothes for you. Künkel will drive you to Köpenick, where we could keep you a few weeks in concealment until the hue and cry raised over your disappearance shall be over. Then, with a certificate from me, present yourself at the Königsberg hospital and take the place of nurse. But we will tell the silly people that you certainly were a sorcerer, for you vanished from the castle in a cloud of smoke and vapor. Say even now that you accept my proposal, and will submit to my wishes. Gabriel Nietzel, I should like so much to reconcile you with the world, to have the consciousness that I had lightened your sufferings, that there was upon earth one human heart that I had consoled, one sorrow-stricken soul that I had relieved. Do you not see that my own soul is in grief for you, and that you humble me by making me feel my powerlessness? You call yourself a criminal because long years ago you made an attempt upon my life. Well, then, atone for your crime now, while you accept life from me."

He had stepped up quite close to Gabriel, and his countenance, usually so proud, wore now an expression of humble entreaty.

"You mean well by me, sir," said Gabriel. "You would alleviate my sufferings?"

"Yes, Gabriel, I would indeed!"

"Well, do so then, sir. Sign my death warrant, that I may go away into everlasting life."

The Elector impatiently stamped his foot, and turned away with indignation and bitterness of heart.

"Be not angry with me, my dear, high-souled Elector," said Gabriel softly. "Indeed, I can not do otherwise, and if you could see into my inner nature you would know that it is impossible for me to live longer. Grant me yet another

last request. Give orders that Frederick William Uhle return to Joachim's vale this very day, and let him remain there until all is over here."

"It shall be done," murmured the Elector with hollow voice.

"And now, sir, be pitiful and let me go away. My soul is weary, like my body."

"Well, be it so!" cried the Elector, straightening himself up. "I will grant you the favor you ask. Stay here and see!"

He strode quickly to the writing table, took a pen, and with rapid strokes signed his name to the document, which he then picked up and handed to Gabriel Nietzel.

"See here," he said, "I have done what you asked of me as a last favor. Do you know by this that I have good intentions toward you, and consider that I prove my love to you, while in the eyes of the world I condemn you?"

"I know by this that you are a noble, magnanimous Prince. Permit me, sir, to kiss your name; for this name upon that paper is for me the word of deliverance, the announcement of an end whose beginning is blessedness!"

He bowed his head over the paper and kissed the name which ratified his sentence of death.

"Frederick William!" he said aloud, "Elector of Brandenburg, blessed be your life! Great works will you accomplish, and posterity will encircle with fame the name which I have just kissed. With deadly intent the wretch Gabriel Nietzel once stretched forth against you his criminal hand. For this he now goes to death, and you live, live in happiness and glory! We are quits! I have now expiated my guilt, and after the space of two days, when you think of Gabriel Nietzel, lift up your eyes to heaven and greet him with kindly remembrance."

"I shall do so, Gabriel. It will sometimes be a comfort to me to think of you in heaven, for I shall believe that your blessed spirit also thinks of me and looks down lovingly upon my toils and conflicts here below. Give me your hand, Gabriel Nietzel. You stand at the portals of death, and there the prince and the beggar are equals. My soul speaks now to yours: Farewell until we meet again!"

"Farewell until we meet again!" repeated Gabriel, laying his thin, wasted fingers within the Elector's strong, white hand.

Then, after a short pause, Frederick William called his chamberlain, who hurried in, convinced that the moment had come when he was to set out with Claus for Köpenick.

"Künkel," said the Elector, with averted face, "go down now and fetch back the men, that they may again lead Claus to prison. Hush! not a word! Go!"

Künkel sighed deeply and hastened to execute his errand.

"Sir," said Gabriel softly, "I beg that you will have the goodness to forward the subscribed sentence to the authorities concerned without delay; for I understand that the execution can not take place until twenty-four hours afterward."

"It shall be attended to, Gabriel Nietzel."

"Then, my dear sir, I should like to make one more request in behalf of my beloved son, or Frederick William Uhle, I should have said. You have promised that he shall be taken into your bodyguard; when all is over with me, will your highness be pleased to have him brought here to Berlin?"

"Yes, I will. He shall become a member of my own regiment and have his lodging in the castle."

"And, sir, please have his mother's grave pointed out to Frederick William Uhle, that he may pray there."

"He shall learn to know it, Gabriel; depend upon me for that."

"I thank your highness. There come my guards! Once more, sir, farewell until we meet again!"

The provost and jailer entered.

"Chain your prisoner again and lead him away," was the Elector's order. "But, hark ye, men, treat him humanely and be compassionate toward him."

He retired into the window niche and looked out into the dark night. Behind him he heard the clashing of the heavy chains with which they were again ironing the prisoner, the creaking of men's hard footsteps, and the jarring of doors. Then all was still. But the Elector did not turn around. He opened the window and let the night wind cool his burning brow. He looked up at the sky, whose profound darkness

was here and there illumined by a shining star. All was silent, save that every now and then a breeze caused a rustling among the trees of the pleasure garden and wafted the perfume of flowers into the Electoral apartment. Suddenly this stillness was broken by the loud rolling of departing carriage wheels. The Elector started and sighed heavily.

"He is gone," he said in low tones. "I will see Gabriel Nietzel no more on earth. I had become so accustomed to seeing my Claus's good, sympathetic countenance on going in and out of the castle that I felt as if something was wrong the whole day if he was not in his place, and was uneasy until I saw him again. I almost, yes, I really loved him. Why should the Elector be ashamed to admit that he loved the beggar, since no one hears him save God alone? O Lord my God! have mercy upon the old beggar; graciously take to thy bosom his purified spirit. Have mercy upon me, too, O Lord! for I, too, am a poor beggar, praying for an alms from thy bounty. Give it to me. O Lord! enlighten the eyes of my understanding and fill my heart with goodness, that I may become the wise, beneficent ruler of my people. Amen!"

He closed the window and returned to the cabinet. How blank and desolate it seemed to him at this moment—how strangely did that paper strike him, that death warrant lying on his writing table!

"Has he gone, Künkel?"

"Yes, your Electoral Highness, he has gone."

"Did he say anything more? Did he speak again?"

"No, your highness, not a single word. Only as he crossed the threshold of the castle and stepped out into the inner court, where the carriage stood, he said with loud voice, 'God bless this house and all who dwell therein!'"

A pause ensued. Then Frederick William slowly passed his hand over his eyes. "Künkel," he said in a low tone, "he was a good man—was Claus."

"Yes, sir, a good and a very unhappy man. God give to his soul eternal peace!"

"And to us all, for we all need it," sighed the Elector. Then, after a short silence, he continued: "I am thinking

of setting out early to-morrow morning on a little trip. I shall go to Potsdam and stay there three days. Make your arrangements accordingly, and now call in my private secretary."

In a few minutes the person summoned entered the cabinet. The Elector was standing beside his writing table looking at the fatal paper. "Take this," he said "affix our seal, direct and forward it at once to the city court. In one hour it must be there."

Two days later, in the early morning hours, an unusual crowd filled the streets of Berlin and Cologne. The whole population seemed to know only one and the same aim, and to have signaled each other to repair to-day to the council house of Berlin. An endless throng of men pressed across the long, wooden bridge leading to Berlin; rolling on in a black stream it swept across the bridge to the corner of Spandow Street, where arose to view the council house with its jutting balconies and small tower.

The master saddler Gebhardt, who had likewise undertaken to keep a beershop in the house left him by his father, had certainly no cause to complain to-day of the locality of his stand, and had no longer any need to envy gossip Lehmann, who dwelt immediately upon the castle bridge where the sacking of the child murderess had taken place. To-day Gebhardt actually would not have exchanged with the glovemaker Lehmann, for his "barrack" enabled him to turn a pretty penny. He had carried out the plan devised by him on the day of Claus's trial, and had put up a scaffolding, covered it with boards, and prepared quite a number of comfortable seats, which he let for two groschen a head to the more well to do of the sight-loving multitude. Very soon all these seats were disposed of, and the privileged owners crowded upon the improvised benches, while the multitude in dense masses took possession of the whole street. The city guards were hardly able to keep clear the little square in front of the council house. On this square arose the scaffold, draped in black, with its low, white block on which lay the bare and glittering axe. At the side stood two of the executioner's servants in their red woolen clothes, the red cowl drawn so

far over the head that the eyes were only seen through openings inserted for the purpose. Not far from the scaffold they had heaped up a huge pile of straw and dry brush, over which a correctly shaped open quadrangle of split wood had been built up into a sort of altar, on whose top was placed a gridiron. This was the funeral pile prepared to receive the criminal's corpse, and to change the human body into a little heap of ashes.

Now was heard in the distance the hollow sound of the beating of drums, and at the same time the bell in the little council house tower let its low, monotonous wailing be heard.

"They come! they come!" resounded from all sides, and the burghers who had been refreshing themselves in Gebhardt's "barrack" with some of his fine Rathenower beer set down their cans and hurried out into the street, while the privileged ones on the tribune wrapped up again in greasy paper the remains of the edibles which they had brought with them, and hurriedly thrust them into their pockets. For now the long-expected moment had come, and the show was actually to begin. "They come! they come!" repeated the crowd. Then followed a deep, breathless silence, for everybody wanted to refresh his heart with the music of the drum, which came nearer and nearer, and the sound of the little bell, which tolled away slowly and regularly. The throng which filled the street leading to the great prison separated, leaving a passage for a cart drawn by one wretched-looking horse, in which sat the *dramatis personæ* of the great tragedy which was about to be enacted. In the white shirt of condemned criminals sat the culprit in the back part of the cart, his head covered with a black cloth, such as became a sorcerer and wizard, that his evil eye might not bewitch and give over to the devil those upon whom it rested on his way to death. On the front seat was seen the prison priest in his black gown with short white surplice, holding a crucifix in his hand, and at his side the director of the prison in his long black robes. At the side of the cart, his broad hand firmly clutching the ladder which served for a side rail, walked the executioner in his dress of fiery red, the red cowl thrown back from the

head so as to disclose to view his fierce face and the long black beard covering his chin and hanging down upon his breast.

But the spectators did not like it at all that they could not see the principal actor in this play, the condemned man, and read upon his face a little of the torture and anguish which he must undoubtedly be undergoing. A discontented murmur began to make itself heard among the mob. It increased with every step made by the procession, and finally swelled into a roar of fury.

"Pull the cloth off his head! We want to see him, we want to see Claus, the murderer and sorcerer!"

This sounded from all quarters, and the raging multitude pressed up so close that the city guards who followed the procession, twenty in number, made haste to surround the cart and protect it against the onslaught of the mob.

"We want to see him! We will see Claus!" was screamed from all sides.

The minister stooped toward the executioner, who had just turned inquiringly to him. "Gratify the poor people," he said. "Remove the cloth, so that everybody can see him."

The executioner complied with this request and pulled down the black cloth which covered Gabriel's head. A universal shout of joy rewarded him. Now they could see him—the sorcerer, the murderer!

His face was no longer so pale and sunken as it had been of late. It was as if glorified by a ray of evening sunshine. His blue eyes, which used to look so dull, were now bright and clear, and turned toward the spectators with an expression of infinite mildness and serenity, while they, on their part, greeted him with derisive shouts and jeering epithets. But gradually this clamor was hushed. Beneath those soft glances scorn and malice melted and changed into a sort of compassion.

"He does not look so wicked," said some. "Nobody would believe that this was a sorcerer!" cried others.

"Poor beggar Claus!" sighed a couple of women, whose lost cows he had found a few weeks ago. At the trial these very women had appeared as witnesses against him, and his having known where to find the cows had been taken as a proof

of his demoniacal art. Now, at the sight of him, they felt something like remorse, and when the cart came nearer they shrank back to avoid being seen by him.

But he had already seen them, and saluted them with a slight nod of the head and a gentle smile of his thin lips.

Ewald, the cobbler, Wendt, the shoemaker, Fürberg, the tailor, and Kurt, the leech, were also among the spectators. They had planted themselves close to the scaffold to obtain a near view of the scene. When the cart drove up and halted before the scaffold, they fixed their looks upon the condemned man with an expression of wicked malice. But what was that which suddenly effaced this expression from their countenances? Why did their cheeks grow pale?—why did they cast their eyes upon the ground?

Claus had looked at them. His large, blue eyes had met their glances, and they felt that they were recognized.

"I wish I were away from this place," said the tailor Fürberg amazed. "I do not know, but I do not believe I could go to execution with such courage."

Ewald, the cobbler, however, yielding to an impulse of his heart, pressed close to the scaffold, whose first step Gabriel Nietzel had just mounted, walking at the preacher's side. "Claus!" he cried, with a voice of entreaty—"Claus, just hear one more word! I beg you to forgive me for the harm I did you, and not to remember against me up there that I laughed at you that time about the Rebecca of whom you talked to yourself. Forgive me, poor Claus, for I am truly grieved about it now."

Claus turned and looked kindly at him. "I have nothing to forgive you for, Ewald," he said. "You acted according to your light, as did the rest of you. I thank you for it. You helped me to attain death, and I am glad to die."

Again he turned slowly around and mounted the steps. A deathlike stillness reigned round about. The multitude packed together as closely as it could stand, having taken possession of all the streets opening upon the square. All the houses, yes, and all the roofs, now gazed in breathless attention upon that slender white figure, which had just gained the platform of the scaffold, and drew itself up erect as if feeling

relieved of a burden and free from all the misery of this world.

And so Gabriel Nietzel did feel free and disincumbered. Years of pain, remorse, and penance had fallen from him. He had passed through the purgatory of earthly torture, and now knew that he was at the end, and that beyond he should be reunited to his Rebecca, who would again receive him, purified of his sin, to her love and her blessed embrace. As he now glanced upward it seemed to him as if the heavens opened and the face of his beloved looked down upon him with a heavenly smile, beckoning to him with beaming eyes. He threw up both arms toward her and cried: "I come! I come! Hail to thee, Rebecca! I go to eternal peace—to eternal love!"

He fell upon his knees and laid his head upon the block. The executioner raised the axe and brandished it aloft. The spectators saw it gleam in the air and then drop. A dull sound reverberated, blood spurted up, and the head of the poor beggar Claus feel from the block upon the scaffold.

The bell still continued to toll and the drum to beat a hollow response. But the people no longer huzzaed; they had grown still, and many a mouth murmured a prayer for the departed. The executioner's attendants lifted up the corpse and bore it with the head across to the pyre, laid it on the gridiron, and set fire to the straw and brushwood. The flames ascended, and soon nothing was to be seen but a pillar of fire rising up bright and high, from which monstrous black clouds floated up to the sky. This pillar of fire was Gabriel Nietzel's grave. And upon the clouds his beatified spirit soared upward to heaven.

IV.—The Day of Audiences.

The three days which the Elector had allowed himself to spend in retirement and solitude at his little hunting seat at Potsdam had expired, and he had returned to his city residence on the morning of the fourth day. His countenance had again assumed its expression of open cheerfulness, his eye was once more clear and bright; only for a moment was it obscured, as his carriage drove up to the castle and his glance was directed to the spot where Gabriel Nietzel had been accustomed to stand and greet him on his return home to Berlin. To-day this spot was empty, and the Elector knew that the melancholy yet tender eyes of his dear beggar Claus would never again look up to and welcome him. But he asked no question concerning him or his death, and when Künkel ventured unbidden to speak of the recent execution, the Elector signed to him with his hand to desist.

"Claus is now before the throne of God on high," he said; "he has done with suffering, and, because I know that and rejoice in it, I would not distress my mind with thoughts of what his poor body must have suffered. Be silent, therefore, on the subject. Besides, I have a great deal to do to-day, and many audiences to grant. Are there many persons in the hall?"

"Yes, your Electoral Grace, it has been long since I have seen the grand antechamber so thronged."

"They come at my summons. Call in my gentleman of the bedchamber, von Maltzan, that he may report to me. But *you* go without delay to the Electress, and say to her Electoral Grace that I crave her forgiveness for not going to her immediately in consideration of my having important audiences to grant. But so soon as these are over I shall do myself the honor of waiting upon her. Then go also to her royal Highness the Princess of the Palatinate, present my most humble compliments to that lady, and——"

"Your Electoral Grace, excuse me for venturing to interrupt you, but both ladies drove yesterday to Boetzow and are not expected to return before noon."

"Then call my gentleman of the bedchamber here!

"It seems, then, that the two cousins are on the best of terms," said Frederick William to himself, as soon as he was alone. "I should never have thought it, yet I am glad of it because it proves to me that the Princess knows how to submit, and that she is in earnest in her efforts to win her cousin's love. That will be pleasant, for it is true the Princess's company is very agreeable, and she is mistress of the art of wiling away time and saying what is witty and interesting——

"Well, Maltzan," he said to that gentleman, who now entered, "tell me who are all those people in the antechamber?"

"Your highness, there are the court preacher Bergius and the pastor of the Nicolai Church, Pommarius."

"They have been summoned. Who else?"

"Then there is a deputation from the Brandenburg States."

"Who else?"

"Two gentlemen who do not understand a word of German, and speak very poor French. I could only make out that they came from Dresden, and that your highness's ambassador there has given them a letter to your Electoral Grace, written in his own hand."

"I know who they are, and am glad that they are here," said the Elector, with a bright smile. "You have named all, have you?"

"No, your highness, Burgomaster Wegelin is also in the antechamber and begs for a gracious hearing. Then last of all came a little bit of a man, who urgently entreats for an audience as he has traveled forty miles on foot to seek a personal interview with your Electoral Highness. The poor man looks dusty and poverty-stricken; he says that he did not rest at all, but that, just as soon as he got to Berlin, only pausing to go into a church, he straightway inquired the way to the castle, that he might speak with the beloved Sovereign, for whose sake he had passed eight days and eight nights on the road."

"The man pleases me; he shall have his audience. But he must first rest and refresh himself a little. Have the poor

traveler carried into the kitchen, and there supplied with food and drink. Then let one of the servants help him to wash and dress, and in two hours' time he must again be found in the anteroom. We shall then probably have gotten through with the other audiences, and his turn is to come last. I shall first receive the gentlemen from Dresden, then Burgomaster Wegelin. The deputation from the States follows him, and afterward the preachers Bergius and Pommarius. You now know what the order is, take your measures accordingly, and attend to the poor foot traveler for me. Let them come in now."

The gentleman of the bedchamber hurried out, and immediately afterward the two foreigners were ushered into the Electoral cabinet.

"You come from Dresden, gentlemen," said the Elector in fluent French, "and, as I hear, are the bearers of a letter for me from my agent there?"

The two gentlemen bowed, and one of them, reverentially approaching the Elector, handed him a great sealed packet, which, full of lively curiosity, he hastened to break open. It was, in truth, a letter from Baron von Plötzen, who had been sent by the Elector Frederick William as envoy extraordinary to the Electoral court of Saxony to settle some disputes about boundaries, in behalf of Magdeburg and Halberstadt.

The communication ran as follows:

"Your Electoral Highness did me the honor of commissioning me while here to engage a few members of the Electoral choir for my most gracious master's service. I have succeeded in so doing, but will not conceal that it was attended with some difficulties, and will cost your Electoral Grace some sacrifices. They are flush of money here in the Electorate of Saxony, and consequently the members of the choir are better paid than elsewhere. I have succeeded in persuading two very good musicians, the one a bass singer, the other who sings with a higher voice—I believe they call it a tenor—to enter the Electoral service. But I have annexed some conditions which seemed to me unavoidable. For instance, that I might engage these Italian musicians for

your highness, I was obliged to offer them some inducements, for Italians are mightily influenced by mercenary considerations. They receive here a salary of six hundred dollars per annum, in return for which they sing three times a week in the Electoral apartments, and also intone sacred music in church after the sermon. I have now insured to these people a yearly income of seven hundred and fifty dollars, on condition, however, that their singing is satisfactory to your Electoral Grace. But in case that they do not please, I have agreed that your highness shall pay each of them fifty dollars by way of indemnity, and allow them to remain three days in the Electoral castle, to rest themselves before setting out on their return here. That your Electoral Grace may not feel hampered in making your decision, note, in conclusion, that nobody here knows aught of my agreement with these singers. Up to this time they are engaged here at Dresden, and have only asked an eight days' leave of absence for the purpose of making a little trip. In case, therefore, that your Electoral Grace prefers to send them back under the above-named conditions, no objection can be made. I remain until death

"Your Electoral Grace's most humble servant,

FREDERICK VON PLÖTZEN."

The Elector thoughtfully folded up the letter, and with difficulty suppressed a heavy sigh. Then he fixed his glance upon the two Italians, who with their great black eyes were looking at him inquiringly and full of expectancy.

"Have you brought your notes with you, so as to sing something for us?" asked the Elector.

"That was not necessary, gracious sir," said one of them. "We carry all our music in our hearts and heads, and your highness need only specify what master's operas we shall sing, and we will obey."

Frederick William felt somewhat embarrassed. He loved music passionately and was himself a performer upon the spinet and violin, and often had found entertainment in making music with his wife, especially in playing duets, when Louisa played upon the spinet and he upon the violin. These duets and other musical pieces had been composed and tran-

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scribed expressly for the purpose by the organist and musical director of the Nicolai church, John Crüger, and Robert Robertin had also composed some fine things for the spinet and other instruments. Moreover, the singers of the Electoral choir, some of whom the Elector had had brought from The Hague, used to sing many beautiful arias for him, but he had forgotten to ask the names of their composers. Nor, too, had he ever heard an opera; that was an Italian invention, which had hardly penetrated yet to the north of Germany. And now these singers expected him to name the Italian masters, selections from whose works he would like them to sing.

He felt somewhat embarrassed. He knew none of those composers' names, and neither did his wife. But there was the Princess Ludovicka. She certainly had a more familiar acquaintance with these things; she was herself a distinguished amateur, and just a few days ago had told with rapture of the delightful theatrical entertainments held in Paris at King Louis's court. Princess Ludovicka could most assuredly suggest operatic pieces suitable for these singers to execute. And how pleasant it was to have such a witty and polished lady at his court!

So thought Frederick William, and at that moment he thanked her for having stayed, and resolved to tell her how highly gratified he now felt by her presence. He bade the two singers for the present to report themselves to the major-domo, who would assign them their rooms; in the afternoon he would have them called, and test their powers of song.

"Though if they were to sing like nightingales," said the Elector, when they had gone out, "yet I could not keep them, for where could I procure money enough to pay such expensive birds? I am really a poor man, with obstinate States and cities, who will vote me no money."

It was unfortunate for Herr Wegelin, Burgomaster of Berlin, that his reception took place just now, for the Elector's brow was clouded and his mood severe.

"Well," he called out, "what brings you to me again? As soon as I see the stern lords of Berlin coming, I know beforehand that they have some complaint to set up or grievance to redress. Or maybe you have hunted up some other

unfortunate, whom you can charge with witchcraft, and by means of whose death you can prepare a congenial entertainment for the bloodthirsty populace of Berlin."

"Your Electoral Highness seems very unfavorably disposed to the cities and magistrates of Berlin and Cologne," said the burgomaster, with a painful sigh.

"It is true, I have no great love for the uproarious, pert, and obstinate people of Berlin and Cologne!" cried the Elector passionately. "Their mouths are always full of big words, but of deeds nothing is ever heard. They think themselves knowing and clever, yet are only knowing in vices and follies. But the arts and sciences, manufactures and commerce lie prostrate, and Berlin and Cologne must needs shrink back in shame from comparison with other capital cities of Germany. Their boastfulness, though, never ceases, and this saucy Berlin has learned from its Burgomaster Wegelin and its proud aldermen. The burgomaster is always in the opposition, and esteems himself to be the lord and ruler here, who alone has power to say what is law and right."

"Not alone, your highness," said the burgomaster, with reverential mien but firm voice—"not alone, your highness; but he has a word to say when the question concerns the welfare of the city, whose burgomaster he has the honor of being. But permit me, sir, to say a few words in defense of the unhappy cities of Berlin and Cologne. Your highness says that they are far behind the other princely residences of Germany, and that the arts and sciences, commerce and manufactures are in a miserable condition here. Since your highness says so, it must be true. Meanwhile I beg your grace to consider what a long series of misfortunes we have experienced, how much affliction and distress we have endured for more than fifty years, and how war has desolated and laid waste the cities and whole country hereabout. The citizens live in wretchedness and want; owners of property have no money wherewith to rebuild their houses, half burned or totally destroyed by the soldiery. And where poverty and misery are at home, art and science can not flourish."

"And where frivolity, love of pleasure, and disorderliness

are at home," cried the Elector, "still less can they flourish! You say the citizens of Berlin and Cologne are poor and wretched, and yet they pursue all sorts of trifling amusements. The women dress with an extravagance that is really shameful, while the men, instead of working and providing for their families, frequent beerhouses and spend hours in watching the tricks of jugglers and puppet men who practice their trade upon the streets and squares, and often even station themselves at the church doors, so that, when the afternoon service is over and men have slept themselves tired, they may enjoy a puppet show. And all this the burgomasters of Berlin and Cologne put up with! They even allow the scholars of the gymnasia here to act plays and appear in ridiculous farces. And now tell me, Sir Burgomaster, what is the matter to-day, and wherefore have you come?"

"Your Electoral Highness," replied the burgomaster, proudly lifting up his head, which hitherto had been bowed in lowly reverence, "I have come, to my own sorrow and regret, to make a most humble representation to your highness, and to beseech you to make allowances for our poor city and not to require too much."

"Where does the 'too much' begin, Sir Burgomaster?"

"Your highness, where the law ends. The law declares that the government of the cities of Berlin and Cologne devolves upon their burgomasters and aldermen. Since the year 1649 both cities again agreed as to the mode in which their government was to be administered, and your highness gave your approval to this agreement. The city of Berlin chooses two burgomasters and one half of the aldermen, the city of Cologne one burgomaster and the other half of the aldermen. As a matter of form, the names of those appointed were laid before the Elector for ratification, and then every year on St. Thomas's Day it has been the custom to introduce the officers elected into the senate house. The task intrusted to the burgomasters and aldermen is to manage the city property, to care for law and order, to regulate the police, to punish criminals, to protect the well-disposed, to aid the citizens in their distresses, and represent them before his Electoral Grace."

"And you are here to-day in the character of their representative, are you not?"

"Yes, your Electoral Grace, I am. I must in the name of both cities—for the Burgomaster of Cologne is sick and has commissioned me to speak in his behalf—I must, in the name of both cities, most urgently beseech your grace to be pleased to leave in our hands the administration of town affairs, for the discharge of which duties we were elected by the inhabitants, and for which we are paid. Of late, however, your highness has issued so many orders that we do not know at all how we can execute them, and the burghers must be utterly ruined if everything is to be stopped, as is the purport of the orders. Now, I beg your grace to abstain from carrying out these orders, which can not be conformable to the views of the burgomasters and aldermen, to whom belongs the management of the city, according to law and justice."

"You mean to say by that!" cried the Elector, with boiling indignation, "that I trouble myself about matters which concern me not, and that it is for the burgomasters and aldermen of Berlin alone to command here, to issue orders and make regulations?"

"Your highness, the cities of Berlin and Cologne have, of course, their own free constitution, and there stands on Broad Street, not far from the cathedral, the stone which for ages has marked the spot where the jurisdiction of the Electoral officer ceases and the jurisdiction of the city commences."

"I shall have that stone thrown down!" cried the Elector angrily. "I will prove to the cities, the burgomasters and aldermen, that the old times of insubordination and disobedience are over, and that you must all submit yourselves to *me*, your Elector and Sovereign! I have done the cities of Berlin and Cologne the honor of exalting them to be my capitals. Here in Cologne I am having reared a new Electoral palace, instead of the old tumble-down castle. And I choose that my places of residence shall do honor to their Prince. I tell you, man, in spite of you, I shall lift my cities out of mire and wretchedness. And I care not if, in effecting my object, I do restrict your liberties and infringe upon your rights. But you would only maintain these rights in order

to retard the progress which I am bent upon making, and your liberties must consist in nothing but following the old beaten track, and living on in dirt. I *have* ordered the hog-stys to be removed from the streets and transferred to the yards; and so it stands! I have decreed that those citizens who keep four hogs should have three of them slaughtered, and instead procure a cow, and to such I have granted free pasturage in the park, and offered to have them instructed in the management of the dairy, free of charge, by the Dutch whom I have had brought here for the purpose. So it stands! I have ordered all filth to be removed from the streets, and that every peasant who comes to town with a loud of corn or pease shall carry off a load of manure. And so that stands! It is also fixed that the citizens shall undertake the service of grading the town and exercise themselves in military movements. I once more commit to you the appointing of a few watchmen, to cry the hours and to go about the streets by night. Lamps, too, shall be lighted when it is dark, that everybody may see which way he is going, and whom he meets. But as to the tax which I have assessed to Berlin, I shall demand it by force if you will not give it in friendliness! I tell you, Wegelin, you had better bow your head and be humble; for I alone am lord here, to give laws, and it is your part to see that they are executed. I expect yet to live to see the day when Berlin shall emerge from her misery and mire, and become a large, wealthy, and handsome city, where business shall thrive and the arts flourish. And then shall I exclaim with pride: 'This is my work! And what Berlin is, she became through her Elector and not through her burgomasters!' There you have my answer, Wegelin. Go and think it over. You are dismissed!"

The burgomaster would nevertheless have dared to reply, but the Elector cut him short at the first words by striking the glass bell on the table with a little silver hammer, thereby summoning Herr von Maltzan into the cabinet.

"Let the deputation from the States enter and conduct the burgomaster out," commanded the Elector, and before Wegelin had quite reached the door, toward which he moved

silently and with bowed head, the four deputies of the States were already within the room.

"Welcome, gentlemen!" called out the Elector, "welcome if you bring me good news! You have requested an audience, and I have granted you one. Tell me what brings you here."

"Your highness, the country's distress and the impossibility of raising the new tax imposed," replied Baron von Arnim, the spokesman of the deputation.

"The old song, the everlasting complaint. You think that there can be no ruling without you, and yet, as soon as you are called upon to take your share of the government by designating the ways and means by which can be procured the money needful for the support of the land and government, you have no other answer to give than that it is impossible to collect taxes. Just tell me, gentlemen, how one can govern a country, care for its improvement, and maintain law and order intact with no money and no sources of income?"

"But, your highness, the poor inhabitants of the Mark have no money or sources of income either," replied von Arnim, sighing. "And if the possibility of making anything is continually diminished, they will at last lose heart altogether, and no longer be able to earn anything."

"And by what means are their gains diminished and their spirits broken?"

"Your highness, by the introduction into the land of so many strangers and foreigners. For that reason we now appear before your highness in the name of the States. Most urgently do they beg and beseech your grace henceforward to condescend to refrain from attracting so many foreigners here."

An expression of painful astonishment flitted across the Elector's face, and the luster of his eye was dimmed.

"This, then, is the return I get," he said, "for all the painstaking and solicitude, which I have given myself for the Mark! Everything is in a wretched state here—agriculture, tillage, cattle rearing, all languish. Not so much because the inhabitants have had many hardships to endure,

but rather because they understand nothing of all these things, and know not how to turn to advantage what they still possess. To benefit my subjects, therefore, to excite their emulation by showing them good examples, I offered inducements to Dutch farmers and gardeners to settle here, paid their traveling expenses, assigned land to them, and hoped by their influence to effect a reform among my own people. And now you gentlemen come and complain of the very thing I was doing purely out of regard for you, as your faithful Sovereign! Instead of thanking me for my interest, you come to complain that I have done the country an injury by what was meant solely for its advantage. Look around you, sirs, behold how flourishing the country begins to look once more; how much better and more profitable is the mode of culture pursued; what returns the meadows begin to make by furnishing fodder for cows; what splendid gardens have been made out of fields once fallow, now abounding in various kinds of vegetables, and resplendent with rare and beautiful flowers! All this you owe to the thrifty, untiring Dutch whom I have attracted to the country. Verily, I quite prided myself upon this action, and it grieves me to see in what a spirit you take it, and how little you seem to comprehend that all my thoughts and deeds have been directed to benefitting my subjects, and helping them to conquer the difficulties of their situation and be again established in easier and more comfortable circumstances."

"Your highness, the immigration of Dutch and other foreigners is not the worst thing of which we have to complain in the name of our constituents. Much worse yet is it that men have been invited here from your highness's other lands and provinces, and invested with Electoral appointments, thereby mortifying the Markers and thrusting them into the background."

"Ah! you allude to my having lately invited here a few officers from Cleves—and Prussia, too, I believe—and having given them Government offices."

"Yes, your highness, that is what has filled the States, and country too, with care and uneasiness. Years ago the Rhenish provinces obtained from your highness the privilege

of having their courts and colleges represented by no foreign officials, but that, on the other hand, all positions should be filled by natives of the country. Your highness bestowed the like privilege upon the inhabitants of the duchy of Prussia. Only the inhabitants of the Mark enjoy no such immunity, and must submit to seing foreigners brought among them and supplied with offices, while we have no lack of men at home well fitted for filling such positions."

"As if you gentlemen were always the judges of that!" cried the Elector, with a mocking smile, "and as if it became you to obtrude upon *me*, your Sovereign Prince, your opinion on the subject!"

"Your highness, we have only been commissioned to beg and implore your highness, in the name of the States, to grant us the same prerogatives which you have accorded to your other provinces, that we may not be forced to believe that the Mark Brandenburg ocupies a lower place in your affections than those other lands."

"For that very reason you should rather have supposed that I preferred the Mark Brandenburg, because I was infusing fresh vigor into her, and striving to engage in her behalf the best and ablest minds."

"Your highness, God be thanked that here at home there is no lack of able minds and prudent men prepared to discharge with dignity the duties of any office which might devolve upon them. Grant to the faithful deputies of the Mark Brandenburg a token of your favor by agreeing that no foreigner shall be invested with any public office among them, though he should come from the closely contiguous bishopric of Magdeburg. Let none but natives hold office among us. If your Electoral Highness will bestow upon us this token of regard, we, for our part, agree to set ourselves zealously to work to gratify the Electoral desires, and put every means in motion to make it possible for the Mark Brandenburg to pay to your grace in three years the required sum of forty-five thousand dollars for the maintenance of your soldiers." *

"Well, then!" cried the Elector, shrugging his shoulders,

* See King, Description of Berlin, part 2.

"at this price I must yield to your narrow and short-sighted views, although I tell you that by such narrow-mindedness you injure far more than you benefit the Mark, and shut the door upon enlightenment. But, alas! I *must* have money for clothing and feeding my soldiers, that I may establish military affairs upon a firm and solid basis. Therefore I must accept the bargain you offer me, and shall announce to you at the next session of the Diet that you are at liberty to adhere to your own limited point of view, and that you can draw the narrowest boundaries around your fatherland, not even recognizing as countrymen the inhabitants of my other provinces. Go with this my answer to those who sent you. Only, see to it that the sums required for the support of the military be forthcoming without more ado. Go then, and convey my friendly salutations to the loyal States!"

V.—Preacher and Tailor.

"Well, I shall get the pay for my soldiers now," said the Elector, after the withdrawal of the deputation, "but it grieves me that they annexed to the grant such a stupid and illiberal condition. Simple men they are, fancying themselves wise in their folly and strong in their weakness. They see nothing beyond the present day and hour, and are disturbed by no cares for the morrow. And they make it matter for reproach that I look farther, and have higher aims in view. They misunderstand my efforts to do them good, and reward me with ingratitude. However little a man may have been influenced in his action by the expectation of being thanked, still, ingratitude must always be painful. I feel weary and utterly dispirited by all these things, and would therefore willingly be excused from an interview with those two wrangling preachers, at least for to-day."

He struck the bell and ordered Herr von Maltzan to ask the two preachers to call again the next day, as well as any other persons who might be waiting in the antechamber to

obtain an audience. The gentleman of the bedchamber bowed silently and was in the act of retiring when the Elector called him back.

"I had well-nigh forgotten the poor traveler, and I should have been sorry for that afterward. He took an eight days' journey to reach me, and therefore I shall not keep the poor man waiting any longer. Bring him in, Maltzan."

"I thank your grace for this condescending permission," said Maltzen, bowing. "It would have really grieved me if the poor little man had been obliged to go off without having effected his object. He would not consent to take either food or drink, because he said that he had made a vow neither to eat nor drink in Berlin before speaking with your highness. Besides, immediately on his arrival he had strengthened himself by prayer, and would need no further restorative, even should he have to wait four-and-twenty hours before gaining admittance to your highness's presence."

"Maltzan, let him come in directly. It pleases me to see, that you have such a kind and sympathizing heart."

A few moments after Herr von Maltzan had withdrawn the cabinet door was softly opened, and a lean, little man entered and timidly paused near the door. It was a strange apparition, and the Elector involuntarily smiled as he caught sight of it. About his somewhat crooked, bandy legs hung loosely wide, gray linen pantaloons. His feet were covered with great buckled shoes, out of which peeped forth coquettishly blue clock stockings. A long waistcoat, trimmed oddly with lace and tassels, covered the upper part of his body, and over this hung negligently and loosely a threadbare overcoat of black cloth, trimmed with brass buttons as large as dollars. The long, withered neck was held erect by a broad, white cravat, made into a gigantic bow whose two wings mounted majestically up to the ill-shaven, bristly chin. Gray hair encircled like a crown the bald brow and upper part of the head, falling in light, scattered curls over the high and somewhat unequal shoulders. But most striking of all seemed the face of this man; it was ugly and shriveled, and yet there was something interesting about it. The lines were furrowed and the brow wrinkled, and yet such living, youthful fire

sparkled in those dark-brown eyes, that they, together with the sharply cut eagle nose, gave a bold, daring expression to the face, which contrasted strangely with the good-humored, soft smile that played about the thin lips.

"Who are you?" asked the Elector very kindly. "Where do you come from, and what would you have of me?"

"Alas! your highness," replied the man, sighing, "in those few words your grace asked three questions. But, with all due deference to your Electoral Highness, I must confess that my three answers will prove somewhat longer, and that they will form a discourse divided into three sections, provided that you extend me the needful permission and lend an open ear."

"You are a queer fellow," smiled the Elector.

"Your Electoral Grace has already had the goodness to intone the first proposition or question, and to anticipate my answer. Your first question was, Who are you? and your highness has condescended to answer, A queer fellow! And a queer fellow I am, in truth, for I am at one and the same time tailor and pastor, penitent and father confessor, layman and priest. As a tailor I make the peasant's clothes, and afterward as pastor do them equal service spiritually by exposing to them their sins and errors. In the pulpit, on Sunday, I spin a tolerably long yarn, and on Monday thread my needle to mend my peasant's church-going suits, that they may present a decent, respectable appearance at preaching the next Sunday. Yes, indeed, I am a queer fellow, as your highness was pleased to remark."

"And as you have proved to me by your discourse," laughed the Elector, sinking into his armchair, and with his bright eyes complacently regarding the strange blending of tailor and preacher in the odd specimen of humanity before him. "Having now finished with article one, let us pass to the second part of the answer."

"The second part is easy and hard to answer, your highness," replied the man shrugging his shoulders. "It depends upon whether your highness requires a metaphysical or a political answer. If the latter is the case, then to your question, Where do you come from? I have to answer, I come

from the village Dobelheim of Halberstadt. But if your highness expects a metaphysical answer, then would it have to be decided whether I ought to say that I come from God or confess that I am in part derived from the devil; and first of all must be settled the grand question, whether man is good by nature or whether he is spoilt in the world through the influence of the devil, who, as the learned ministers say, goes about in bodily shape, without being interfered with by the Almighty. I am no scholar, but a simple pastor, daring to doubt the reality of a devil incarnate, hence deeming the exorcism and expulsion of the devil at the baptism of children not merely a superfluous, but a blasphemous act, since it would seem to imply that God is not as powerful as the devil, for where would be the omnipotence and omnipresence of the Deity if the devil had already possession of the bodies of infants?"

"You are a rash, extravagant talker," cried the Elector cheerfully, "and it seems to me that your tongue at least has suffered no fatigue from your long journey, and still runs with extraordinary boldness and activity. We will not press further the metaphysical part of the answer, and I must for the present declare myself satisfied with the political answer. You are from the village of Dobelheim of Halberstadt, then; and what is your name?"

"My name is Jacob Samuel Fear-God Live-Right Conrad Martin Eberhard Trust-God Gottlieb Charles John Frederick Richter."

"What? You venture to assert that you bear twelve names?"

"No, your highness, I possess twelve Christian names, but I bear only one at a time. In January my wife calls me Jacob, in February Samuel, in March Fear-God, etc. Every month she calls me by a different name, as my parents and brothers and sisters used to do. But this comes from a vow made by my blessed father when he carried me to the baptismal font. My father was a poor tailor here in Berlin, and, as times went very hard with him during the war, in his difficulties he bethought himself of giving a great christening, and inviting twelve rich and influential godfathers to officiate on the occa-

sion, to each of whom he said that he held him in such especial love and honor that he cherished no more ardent desire than to bestow his Christian name upon his first-born son. Now, your highness knows that good, obtuse men are more accessible to flattery than anything else, and that great advantage may be taken of their weakness. The godfathers whom my father loved so much accordingly all duly repaired to the church at the appointed hour, and each was in turn astonished to find eleven other sponsors besides himself, all affirming that my father wished to name his first-born son in especial compliment to them. My father now confessed with tears in his eyes that he was in great poverty, and had invited twelve sponsors because he hoped that each of the rich, generous gentlemen would bestow a dollar upon the child, and thus save his wife and child from suffering the pangs of hunger for a few weeks, until he could earn some more money. And he had selected these twelve godfathers because they were the richest, most magnanimous, and most generous citizens of all Berlin, and because therefore he felt that their names would entail a blessing upon his son. My father actually succeeded, by such moving and flattering appeals, in propitiating his twelve godfathers, and each gave him two dollars on condition that the child should once in the year be called by his name. This my father solemnly promised for himself and his son, and both have adhered scrupulously to the engagement; for, although my good father has been long since dead, up to the present day I change my Christian name with every month, according to the succession of my godfathers."

"And what is your name this month?"

"My name is Gottlieb this month, your Electoral Highness."

"Let us proceed now to solve my third query, Gottlieb Richter. If I mistake not it was, What would you have of me?"

"Yes, that was it; and I make answer, Justice and a favorable sentence!"

"Ay! Gottlieb Richter, in one breath you have given utterance to a contradiction. If you demand justice, you have no

need of asking a favorable sentence, since justice asks not for favor but stands of herself."

"That is very true, gracious sir; but in our distressful times the greatest favor to which one can aspire is to obtain justice, and not have it wrested from him by the interposition of some strong and mighty hand."

"Have you cause to dread such a strong and mighty hand, and do you know to whom it belongs?"

"Yes, your highness, I do entertain such a dread, and the hand belongs to the counselor of the consistory and court preacher Stoschius."

"What!" cried the Elector amazed. "You venture to accuse my court preacher Stoschius, and to maintain that he would pervert justice?"

"Yes, your highness, the justice of our degenerate days, if blind, yet seems to have a keen perception of the approach of the high and honored. Herr Stoschius, you see, is a prominent and distinguished court preacher, while I am only a village pastor, poor and unknown, possessing nothing in the world but a good conscience, ten children, and the love of my poor flock, which, by the way, is a rich boon of Providence."

"A boon which many a rich and famous man might envy you, Gottlieb Richter. But now tell me what you have to do with my court preacher and counselor of the consistory?"

"Ah! most gracious sir, the counselor of the consistory, in pursuance of an Electoral order, made a tour through the districts assigned to your highness at the conclusion of the Peace of Westphalia, and so came also to Halberstadt and even to our little hamlet of Dobelheim. It is a wretched little village, far remote from the highways of traffic, and nobody troubles himself much about us, but least of all the Bishop of Halberstadt, to whom we are nevertheless subject. Our little village consists of Protestant peasants and colonists, and was poorly enough esteemed, until the gracious, pious, and blessed Elector Frederick William took pity upon the Lutherans and Calvinists and gained for them equal rights and equal respect for their creeds. We had our own little parish church, and the peasants durst choose their own pastor, but at the same time paid his salary wholly unaided, and worked

his fields for him. Well, the support was scanty enough, and the pastor was not much better off than any peasant of his congregation. But he was content, for he had lived long in the community, and desired nothing better than to abide there. Dobelheim is such a quiet, peaceful, shady little spot, and it struck me as so homelike when I came there in my wanderings that I forthwith determined to stay and settle there."

"Gottlieb Richter," said the Elector, smilingly threatening him with his finger, "truly, you spin as long a yarn as if you were preparing to darn a huge rent in some peasant's smock frock, instead of instituting a complaint against our counselor of the consistory and court preacher Stoschius, as you proposed to do. Tell me, first of all, then, what brought you here, and why do you demand of me justice and even favor against my court preacher?"

"Ah! your Electoral Highness, because with his great, haughty eyes he would see in me only the tailor and not the pastor. You sent him abroad through the land to inspect the churches and congregations, but he did not return like the dove with the olive branch in her beak, but like the vulture, who pounces upon the doves and destroys their nest. For ten years, ever since our old minister's death, I had occupied his place, and discharged all the duties of the pastoral office to the satisfaction of my dear little flock, when lo! here came the counselor of the consistory, and fell into a rage when he learned that I was a preacher merely on Sundays, and when business allows, but in the week nothing but a poor little tailor, and——"

"Hold on!" interposed the Elector. "I will not merely hearken to your accusation, but at the same time hear my court preacher's defense, and what you have to say against him you must say in his presence!"

His large blue eyes were fixed upon Gottlieb Richter's face with a sharp, searching expression. But the man's haggard, shrewd countenance remained perfectly calm, and seemed even to look on approvingly, while the Elector, summoning Chamberlain Künkel, bade him go forthwith to the court preacher Stoschius and command his immediate attendance upon the Elector.

"I thank your highness," said Gottlieb Richter, quickly nodding his head. "You are indeed a wise and just judge, who hears both sides of a question, and condemns none before he is proved guilty. God only grant that the court preacher may consent to accede to your invitation, and come without delay."

"He will be ready enough," said the Elector, smiling, "and if I invite him will surely come. You are perfectly willing, then, that he should hear what you have to allege against him?"

"I am glad, if respect for your Electoral Highness can induce his worship to listen to me, for in Dobelheim, when I tried to speak, he bade me hold my tongue, and, like a milestone, merely showed me the way to the door."

"It must indeed have surprised him a little to find a tailor as pastor of a Christian community."

"But, your highness, nobody was ever born a preacher, and the apostle Peter himself was nothing but a poor fisherman."

"You know how to give an answer," said Frederick William, smiling.

"I hope, too, your highness, that I need not be speechless when on the day of judgment our Lord shall ask me if I have led an honest, useful life, and have been a faithful guardian of the souls which he has intrusted to my care."

"You believe, then, that our Lord himself set you apart as the pastor of your congregation?"

"Yes, your Electoral Highness!" cried Gottlieb Richter joyfully, laying his right hand upon his breast as if in confirmation of his words—"yes, I have a firm, unshaken confidence in the genuineness of my calling. God so ordered it, that in the course of my wanderings as a poor journeyman tailor I should come to Dobelheim and settle there. God so ordered it, that one day, when I carried back to the good old minister his gown, which I had spent eight days in repairing, the old gentleman should enter into discourse with me, and his good, kind heart be so drawn out to me that I afterward ventured to come to him daily, when my day's work was done, to read pious and edifying books, whose contents we discussed

together. God willed that the good old pastor should instruct me, strengthen my faith, and explain and elucidate what I did not understand in the Holy Scriptures. So by and by I became quite versed in theology, and when the pastor at last became weak and sickly, he could with a good conscience allow me to take his place in the pulpit and elsewhere, for he knew that I would speak and act in accordance with his own views and feelings, and, moreover, every Sunday evening he read the Gospels with me, and I wrote down heads of subjects upon which I had to preach. Thus I was for ten years my dear pastor's adjunct, he himself giving me that title, and the villagers as well. When now the pastor—God rest his soul!—finally died of old age, and I was weeping over him, as became a grateful son, for he had indeed been a father and friend to me, the leaders of the congregation came to me, and roused me out of my melancholy by saying, 'Trust-God Richter'—my name was Trust-God that very month—'Trust-God Richter, you must not sit any longer weeping and lamenting over the old man, for you have no time, since you well know that to-morrow is Sunday, and you have the duties of your office to discharge.' 'What office?' asked I in astonishment. 'Why, your office as our preacher,' said they, and when I made opposition and declared that it was impossible, they made answer: 'Why should not things go on to-morrow as they have gone on for the past ten years? You have been acting as our good minister's substitute for ten years, and proved acceptable to us. Why should it be any the worse, merely because the old pastor no longer occupies the parsonage, but lies asleep in the churchyard?'"

"That was indeed fitly and wisely spoken by the people," cried the Elector involuntarily, "and methinks they were right."

"I thank your highness for your gracious approval," said Gottlieb Richter joyfully. "I, too, felt in my heart that the good people were right; and when they told me that the congregation had met that very day and unanimously chosen me for their pastor, and that therefore, as the oldest of the community, they had come to announce to me that from that hour I was the minister of their choice, my heart felt fearful,

and at the same time right glad, and I thanked God for the confidence and love which the congregation testified toward me, although I was quite crushed by the high honor bestowed upon me, the poor tailor. I replied to the elders of the congregation that I could not give an answer immediately, for I must first consult with God, my own conscience, and the departed spirit of my good old pastor. I told them that if they would only all assemble in church as usual, I would give them an answer: if I did not appear in the pulpit, they might then know that I could not accept their offer and conscientiously assume the duties of the pastorate. They were content with this and left me with that understanding. And now I was alone with God, my conscience, and the departed spirit of my dear old pastor."

For a moment Gottlieb Richter was silent and reverentially looked up to heaven, as if he there saw the departed spirit of his revered friend and greeted it with devotion.

The Elector indulged him, being unwilling to disturb his silent prayer, and when the door of the antechamber, to which Gottlieb's back was turned, softly opened, and the court preacher Stoschius entered in full canonicals, with all the gravity pertaining to his office, the Elector motioned to him by a sign to remain quietly standing where he was, and to listen. Then turning again to Gottlieb, he inquired in soft, benign tones: "And what followed, Gottlieb Richter? Did you commune with your three friends as to whether you should accept the living of Dobelheim?"

As he thus questioned, he cast a rapid glance across at the court preacher Stoschius, whose features had now assumed still greater gravity and whose brow was clouded.

"Yes," replied Gottlieb, awakening from his reverie as from a dream—"yes, I communed with my three friends. I went out to my dear friend's grave, and there, kneeling down, examined my conscience, whether it were pure and sincere, and not influenced by sinful presumption and worldly vanity in accepting the offer made me by the congregation. Then I prayed right fervently to our Heavenly Father, that he would enlighten my mind and tell me what I must do, and that he would give me a token of his will. And when I had

thus prayed I opened my beloved pastor's old Bible, which I had taken with me to his grave, and, without looking, laid my finger on a passage of the open page, and then stooped down to read it."

"Well," asked the Elector, listening eagerly, "what did you read? What was in the passage to which your finger pointed?"

"Your highness, it was written there, 'Thou shalt sing and give praises unto the name of the Lord, and publish it to all people.' And as I read that I seemed to hear the voice of my dear old preacher speaking to me in these words, 'Go your ways and praise the Lord, doing as I have taught you!' Quite cheerfully and devoutly I returned home, and watched and prayed all night, with true devotion of heart preparing myself for the coming Sabbath. As the bells rang for church, my heart beat quite loud and my breath seemed to fail me, as, with Bible in hand, I took my way through the shady walk leading from the parsonage to the church. Nobody could see me in this walk, and the vestry room likewise was secluded and dark. I was there alone and heard the congregation singing a choral. With devout heart I knelt and besought God to pity my weakness, and, although I was nothing but a tailor, to forbid that my congregation should one day say of me, 'We have made a goat our gardener, he has laid waste our land; woe be unto us!' Now the congregation was silent, and I slowly ascended the pulpit stairs. I had done the same every Sunday for ten years, and it had never occurred to me that I had no right to do so. But to-day my heart was oppressed with anxious timidity, and as I crossed the chancel and advanced toward the pulpit I felt that I grew deadly pale. The whole congregation was present of course, and as soon as the good people caught sight of me they arose from their seats, lifted up to me their friendly faces, and exclaimed aloud and unanimously: 'God bless our dear pastor. May God long preserve to us our dear preacher, Trust-God Richter!' 'Peace and joy be with us all!' cried I, and then for awhile we wept together, then dried our eyes, and I began my sermon and brought it happily to an end. In this way, most gracious Elector, I became pastor in Dobelheim, and have discharged the

duties of this office nine years to the satisfaction of my congregation. We love each other cordially, and are like one great family, that in us may be fulfilled the words of the apostle John, 'Children, love one another.' And now, your Electoral Highness, the court preacher Stoschius would count it against me as a crime that I hold the place of pastor in the village of Dobelheim. He called me a blasphemer and sacrilegious person, and in the Elector's name forbade me once and forever to set my foot in the pulpit, unless I wished to be arrested and cast into prison."

"Is that true, Stoschius?" asked the Elector, turning to the court preacher, who with flushed and angry countenance had listened to Gottlieb Richter's narration, and now drew near with solemn steps.

"Yes, Sir Elector," he cried pathetically—"yes, it is true. I did forbid this tailor to enter the sacred pulpit. I did not wish the house of God to be desecrated and a mere patcher to play preacher."

"Most gracious sir," cried Gottlieb, "a genuine pastor should be also a genuine patcher. His tongue should be the needle with which he mends the rents torn by his spiritual children in their virtue and integrity."

"Cease your biting metaphors," said the Elector, with a slight smile. "I have something more to say to Stoschius.—Reverend sir, you say that Gottlieb Richter has desecrated the pulpit: in what way has he done so?"

"By entering it in an unwarrantable manner!" passionately exclaimed the stern counselor of the consistory, "by daring to play the part of a consecrated servant of the Lord, and exercising functions only befitting a priest. But he is no priest, no consecrated servant of the Lord. He is nothing but a tailor, and in that capacity serves the community, whose pastor he presumes to call himself; and, since I wished to find out with my own eyes whether they had told me the truth, I so managed it as to arrive at the village of Dobelheim one Saturday afternoon. I left my carriage, and on foot inquired my way to the parsonage and entered unannounced. Lo! in a wretched little apartment sat this man, three coarse smock frocks lying before him, and busily engaged patching a

ragged sleeve. 'What are you making there,' said I, 'and why do you sew away so industriously?' He did not even look up, and, instead of rising to welcome the court preacher of his Electoral Grace, as respect and courtesy required, quietly sewed away and said composedly, 'I am mending the torn Sunday coats of the peasants, and sew so industriously because to-morrow is Sunday and the minister is much vexed if his peasants do not appear neat and tidy at church.' Then said I, 'What is your pastor's name? Where is he?' and, perfectly unabashed, the fellow answered me quietly, 'This month his name is Fear-God Richter, and he sits here on the bench mending coats.'"

The Elector quickly drew his hand across his face to conceal from the court preacher a smile, which he felt to be irrepressible. But in his eagerness Herr Stoschius was not conscious of this, and indignantly proceeded: "Yes, gracious sir, those were his words, and when I asked what they meant he added, 'They mean that in the week I am a tailor, but on Sunday a preacher.' A shudder passed over me, and as I looked at the man it struck me that it might be the devil mocking me in human shape, for you know he goes through the world tempting the good and laying snares for the souls of the just. I could not and would not believe that such a crime was actually committed by a man, and proposed to myself quietly and patiently to wait until Sunday morning. I rode to a gentleman's country seat in the neighborhood, passed the night there, and returned the next morning to Dobelheim. The worship of God had already begun, and upon entering the church what a sight I beheld! There stood the tailor of yesterday in a black gown, and in front of him two women with little children in their arms and sponsors around them. He had just opened the sacred volume and was about to begin the ceremony. But I rushed up to him, snatched the book out of his hand, thrust him back and called out: 'How dare you commit such a crime! You are an impostor, and instead of expelling the devil from the bodies of these children, you will drive the devil into them by your blasphemous act!'"

"Yes, thus you spoke!" exclaimed Gottlieb Richter,

"and it was a right edifying example of Christian toleration and pitying love that you gave to my terrified congregation. But they did not acknowledge it as such——"

"How dare you interrupt me?" asked the court preacher haughtily. "Did you not hear his most worshipful highness bid you cease your impertinence?"

"It is true, Gottlieb, that I bade you be silent, although not in such harsh terms as the court preacher uses. Speak now, your reverence. How did the congregation deport itself?"

"Your highness, it was plain to see that the fellow had bewitched the whole set and given them over to the devil. For they cursed and swore, darted at me with their fists, and would surely have beaten me if this man had not placed himself in front of me and rebuked them until they became quiet again."

"Did he do that?" asked the Elector. "Did he protect the court preacher Stoschius, who had accused him of such a dreadful crime? I admire that in him, and it seems to me that with such a spirit he could not have been given over entirely to the devil. And what else happened, your reverence?"

"I then mounted the pulpit, and, after the raging and screaming pack of peasants had been quieted, announced to the congregation that the tailor Richter, who presumed to act the parson, to assume the priestly vestments, and exercise clerical functions, had thereby incurred heavy guilt, for he had profaned God's sanctuary and misused the name of the Lord. Therefore he must be termed a blasphemer and sacrilegious person. I informed the congregation that in the shortest possible space of time I would supply them with an ordained and educated minister and install him in that living. With solemn words, by virtue of my office, I prohibited the tailor from ever again entering the pulpit or undertaking ecclesiastical duties, threatening him with being put under arrest and thrown into prison so soon as he should transgress my orders. I acted thus by virtue of my office and the holy obligations which it imposed upon me."

"Now, Gottlieb Richter," said the Elector, after a short

silence, "if you have anything more to say in your own defense, do so."

"Your Electoral Highness, I have only this to say: The congregation chose me for their paster of their own free will, and I for my part discharged the duties of the office of my own free will, to our mutual satisfaction."

"But no one may hold an office for which he is not qualified," cried the court preacher haughtily, "and for which he has not prepared himself by previous study."

"True," said Gottlieb composedly. "For example, if you were to undertake the office of head tailor in our village, that would of course be to commit a great injustice, for you would not be able to perform its duties, not having gone through the needful course of preparation. But for being village pastor no other studies were required than those which I was privileged to receive from my dear old pastor during the course of ten years. He did not, indeed, instruct me in mere theology, but in the fear of God; he drummed into me no obscure, latinized modes of speech, but taught me to address my congregation in simple, direct words, coming from the heart and therefore reaching hearts. Besides, I inherited from the good pastor three hundred fully written and beautiful sermons, which it was expressly stipulated in his will that I should sometimes read to his people."

"But you know as well as anybody," cried the court preacher, "that only an educated man ought to undertake the office of preacher, and can possibly produce a regular and well-arranged sermon."

"I have been educated, Sir Counselor of the Consistory and court preacher. Only, instead of the University of Wittemberg, I have attended the University of Dobelheim, and for ten long years listened to most instructive lectures from my pastor. I am, therefore, an educated man; and as to sermons, they please my congregation, and if the people do not sleep so soundly as when a learned doctor holds forth in a pompous harangue of which they understand nothing, their hearts are the more awake and their souls watchful."

"Stoschius," said the Elector, smiling, "I verily believe

this man does know how to talk, and can edify his congregation."

"That may well be, your highness," replied Stoschius stiffly, "but that only makes the matter worse, and proves that his congregation is already stupefied, and can no longer distinguish a common tailor from an educated divine and bishop of souls. I grant that by making use of the papers left by the deceased minister he may be able to read off a correct discourse; but it is impossible that a tailor should with dignity and propriety conduct the administration of the sacraments. For instance, how would he perform the holy rite of baptism, he, tailor Richter? How would he practice the same?"

"I perform the service in the manner customary in our Church," quietly returned Gottlieb.

"Show us, then, how you would baptize a child. Will your highness permit me to put this man to the test, and lead him *ad absurdum* in your presence, thus proving to you that he understands nothing whatever about sacred things?"

"Put him to the test, reverend sir," replied Frederick William. "You see, I grant you full indulgence, and listen respectfully to your colloquy without meddling in it at all myself."

"I thank your highness, and will proceed forthwith to demonstrate the tailor's utter unfitness for playing the part of pastor. Just tell me how you would baptize a child. Make the experiment."

"To do so, your reverence, I must first of all have a child."

In his theological zeal Herr Stoschius fetched the little child from his head, as Jupiter produced Minerva. That is to say, he took from his right reverend cranium his little black velvet cap, and laid it on the table before the tailor.

"We will fancy," he said, "that this is a child; baptize it now."

"If I am to go through the ceremony of baptism I must have water, too."

"You are right," said the Elector. "Water belongs to baptism as wine to the Lord's Supper. There stands a large glass of fresh water, take that."

Gottlieb took the glass and placed it on the table beside Herr Stoschius's little cap; then he bowed lowly and reverentially before the Elector, and somewhat less profoundly before the court preacher.

"If the august and revered witnesses of this solemn act of baptism are ready," he said in a loud voice, "then may proceed the sacred rite asked for by the court preacher Stoschius, as the father of this little cap."

"We are ready, reverend sir," said the Elector, with a friendly nod.

With slow, solemn movement Gottlieb now picked up the little cap, and holding it with his left hand over the improvised baptismal font, sprinkled it with water with the right, saying:

"In accordance with the requirement of my gracious Sovereign and Elector, and inasmuch as Herr Stoschius will have it so, I baptize thee, little cap. Thou shalt be called Little Cap now, and so long as there is a thread of thee left. If such is your wish, tender father of this cap, then answer with a loud and solemn Yes!" *

The Elector could no longer preserve his gravity, but broke forth into a loud, merry laugh. Then he rose, withdrew into a window recess, and beckoned to the court preacher.

"Listen, reverend sir," he said, inclining toward the stern theologian and speaking softly, so that he might not be understood by Gottlieb, who continued to sprinkle his little cap with water—"listen, reverend sir; let the man go on undisturbed in the regular discharge of the duties of his office, for he is wiser than you." †

The exalted counselor of the consistory and court preacher looked with stupid astonishment into the Elector's smiling face. But the latter was not at all disconcerted by this, and continued: "Probably he is better fitted to be the preacher of a plain, simple village community than a scholar would be, and you would assuredly have done better if you had not allowed your theological zeal to get the better of you, instead

* The tailor's own words. See King's Historical Description of Berlin, vol. ii, p. 54.

† The Elector's own words. See the same authority.

of being governed by a little Christian charity and forbearance. There is enough of dissension in our churches without this. You preachers find peculiar delight in attacking and making war upon one another, although you know that I abominate this perpetual wrangling, and you yourselves must admit to your own consciences that the ministers of all confessions are not called to sow the wind that they may reap the whirlwind, but to bring peace, whose fruit is universal love toward man. Now, let that poor man alone, and disturb him no longer in his course of action, for I tell you he is one of the righteous, and a faithful servant to his God and earthly Sovereign. But that you may not be humbled and put to shame before him, I shall permit you to say that you have convinced yourself of his fitness for his position, and that you have therefore begged me to give my consent to his holding the office of pastor."

"Your Electoral Grace," murmured the concistorial counselor, highly shocked, "I should have to retract, I should have to bow my head before——"

"Before reason and myself, yes, that you shall," interposed the Elector. "In your blind zeal you have done injustice; now make restitution, and that without delay!"

He left the window recess and stationed himself not far from the poor village tailor and pastor. The consistorial counselor now approached the latter, and endeavored to force a smile to his quivering lips.

"You have certainly shown me one thing," he said with difficulty, struggling for breath, "you have proved to me that you do understand the holy sacraments very well and have a close acquaintance with their forms. Since, moreover, you have for your use the written sermons of your predecessor, and seem to possess a good Christian disposition and to be honored by your village congregation, we shall in this case make an exception to the common rule, and wink at this irregularity, offering no further hindrance to your continued discharge of the duties of your office. Provided, of course, that your Electoral Grace has no further objection to make to it," added Herr Stoschius, turning to the Elector with a reverential bow.

"No, my worthy court preacher," smilingly replied Frederick William, "I have no objection at all, and entirely agree with you. We shall leave Gottlieb Richter in his place, and not esteem it as any reproach to him that he is not a learned scholar who has completed his studies at Wittemberg. For, to speak plainly, I am not particularly well pleased with this university, and have already made up my mind to issue an edict prohibiting all my subjects from going to Wittemberg, there to prosecute their theological and philosophical studies.* For this Wittemberg is a very nest of discord, perpetually promoting disputes between the Lutherans and Reformers. Return to your congregation with a cheerful heart, Gottlieb Richter, live among them in unity and concord, and, as you say, work upon their consciences on Sundays and in the week upon their coats. Continue in innocence of heart, in the love of God and man. But to you, Sir Consistorial Counselor, to you I repeat the words I once before spoke to you: be mild and conciliatory toward the preachers of both confessions. When the preachers pray, let them not have cause to sigh and moan. Let them not be oppressed in their persons or property; for we have never been willing to assume supremacy over conscience, but would leave each one to worship God according to the dictates of his own heart.† Be ever mindful of this, Sir Court Preacher, and consistorial counselor Stoschius!"

VI.—Music and Art.

The rehearsal of the two Italian musicians was to take place on the afternoon of the same day, in the Electress's apartments. Signors Altiera and Grimani had been ordered to hold themselves in readiness for the Electoral summons to descend to the princely apartments. The Elector now repaired thither, his wife and the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine having gone there immediately after dinner.

* See Orlich, History of the Great Elector, vol. ii, p. 469.

† The Great Elector's own words. See ibid., p. 464.

"Now, ladies," said the Elector cheerfully, "if such is your pleasure, we can send for the Italian musicians, and the concert may begin. We have invited our organist Krüger to attend, as well as a few other members of our choir, and old Conrad von Burgsdorf besides."

"Of course," exclaimed Princess Ludovicka, smiling. "Burgsdorf, the Elector's favorite, may never be absent!"

"And I, my husband," said the Electress, "have taken the liberty of inviting my Lord Marshal von Schwerin to this little concert."

"Of course," laughed the Princess, "Schwerin, the Electress's favorite, may never be absent!"

A light shadow flitted across the Elector's brow, but he forced himself to smile. "And what favorite have you invited, Princess, because he may never be absent?"

"I have no favorite. My heart is dumb; it has crept into a corner of my soul, and there sits and weeps. Yet speak not of *me*. Let us talk of the concert. What airs and duets are these signors to sing for us?"

"Ah! that is the very thing about which I wished to ask the ladies. These gentlemen would leave to us the selection of music, affirming that they can sing all the operas by heart. But to my shame I must confess that I am so ignorant as not even to know the names of the Italian operas which are now represented at some of the European courts. I therefore leave to the ladies the choice of the music."

"I must beg to be excused, my dear," replied Louisa softly; "I am in the same position as yourself, Frederick. I, too, know nothing whatever about the new Italian opera, not even rightly understanding what is meant by it. I know nothing but sacred music, fine choruses, hymns, and songs. These form the joy and solace of my soul, but I have never heard any operatic music."

"Oh, you happy, simple, and innocent creature!" cried Ludovicka, tenderly embracing the Electress, "how I envy you that innocence! I, alas! possess not a trace of it, and my restless spirit is ever longing for new stimulants, new inspiration. I must know everything, occupy myself with all that is new in the field of art, and so soon as I hear of such

things, no rest remains to me until I have made nearer acquaintance with them. That is because I lack the satisfaction and quiet restraints of the household circle, for which we poor women are destined."

"No, cousin, you accuse yourself most unjustifiably," cried the Elector, with animation. "You blame yourself where you merit praise and commendation. It is, indeed, praiseworthy to preserve such a lively interest in the arts and sciences as you do, and to this we have been indebted for hours of the brightest enjoyment during your few weeks' sojourn among us. What a pleasure it was to us to-day, for instance, when you told us of your favorite poet, Shakespeare, and how our souls were refreshed by that wonderful monologue which you repeated to us from his tragedy of Julia and her lover. It is marvelous that you can retain all that in your memory, and reproduce it as if you were yourself an actress."

"Say, rather, it would be a shame if I were not acquainted with the glorious poetry of my adored William Shakespeare, and could not retain a few of his lines in my memory! I have grown up with them; noble Shakespeare has always been my teacher, counselor, and comforter, although he has been dead fifty years already. But he still lives immortal in his works, and speaks to us with the flaming tongue of the seraph and the tender voice of man. How could I help knowing Shakespeare, since my mother is an Englishwoman, and in her fatherland he is idolized by the whole nation!"

"I wish," said the Elector thoughtfully—"I wish that I had sufficient acquaintance with the English language to enable me to read those beautiful plays of your great poet, for what you have told me of them has made me curious to hear more."

"I will read Shakespeare with you, cousin!" cried the Princess joyfully, "and what you do not understand I can translate for you and write off the translation; then we might study a few scenes from the plays and act them, as we used to do in Paris with the comedies of Molière. O cousin, dear cousin! what glorious, delightful hours those will be, and how very happy we shall be—that is to say," with a sweet smile

to the Electress—"that is to say, if our beloved Louisa approves, and will take part in our readings."

"I will take part in everything that gives my dear husband pleasure," returned Louisa cordially, "and, although I may keep silence myself, because I am too little versed in these matters, yet I take pleasure in listening to you, and sympathize with you at least in spirit."

"Ah, Louisa! what an angel you are!" cried Ludovicka; "what admirable modesty united with so much solid information, such an active, energetic spirit!"

"Indeed, my knowledge is very limited," said the Electress. "My information concerns only the farm and dairy, and my whole art consists in loving my husband above everything and concentrating my thoughts upon making him happy."

"And that, dearest Louisa, is an art which you understand to perfection," exclaimed the Elector, pressing his wife's hand to his lips.

"Ah! what a tender matrimonial scene," remarked the Princess, with a slight touch of sarcasm in her tone. "But we have entirely forgotten our Italian singers and their concert."

"And the operas from which they are to sing," added the Elector. "You know these operas, Princess Ludovicka, do you not?"

"Oh, yes, we have often sung extracts from them at the court of the Queen mother, Anne of Austria. Her Italian director of the choir was also my singing master, as Mignard, the court painter, was my instructor in painting."

"Verily, cousin, I must repeat that you are a miracle of learning and acquirements!" cried the Elector.

"And I," whispered the Electress softly to herself—"I am a poor, pitiable woman, for I know nothing at all of all these things, and Frederick will be weary of me and despise me when he compares me with Ludovicka, for she, alas! knows everything, understands everything, and is so witty, so beautiful, and so entertaining! And I—alas!"

She suppressed the sigh which struggled for utterance, and forced herself to listen with a smile of friendly attention

to the Princess's explanation of the nature of the opera that just a short time previously had come from Italy, the home of music and art, to the courts of Versailles, Dresden, and Vienna. The two ladies were about to repair to the music room, escorted by the Elector, who had already offered each of them an arm, when he suddenly stood still and with a somewhat embarrassed air turned to the Princess.

"By the way," he said, "in pleasant conversation with you I had well-nigh forgotten a principal thing. We are now to have the pleasure of hearing these Italian singers, and we may do so with full right, for we reward them quite respectably for their trouble. But I beg of you, Electress and you, too, Princess, not to lavish too great praise upon them when the performance is over. Even though they have sung with exquisite taste and skill, say not much about it. I have my reasons for this, and, although I would not discuss them further, they are sufficiently important to make me urge you not to forget my request."

With lively words the Princess gave assurance that she would certainly keep this in mind. The Electress said nothing, but her eyes met those of the Elector with a smile full of meaning and intelligence. They now repaired to the music room, where were already assembled Burgsdorf, Schwerin, and the choristers, and the two Italian singers were now summoned.

In the name of the Electoral pair the Princess called upon them to sing from the Darius of Beverini and the Berenice of Freschi, and the eyes of the two singers beamed with pleasure. For these two operas were at that time all the rage throughout Italy, and offered the singers the best opportunity of displaying their extraordinary accomplishments and going off into artistic flourishes, trills, and runs. The little lead-incased panes of glass in the Electoral apartment rattled in response to the loudly echoing song, and the old gray walls themselves seemed to shake as if agitated by these melodies, the like of which had never been heard in the sedate Electoral castle of Berlin. What shouts of joy and grief, what glowing love and painful longing, what bursts of passion and what trembling sighs! The impressions made upon the sev-

eral auditors were wholly different. The distinguished organist and celebrated composer Krüger grew purple from horror and amazement. His eyes were wide open, and about his thick lips played a smile of inexpressible contempt. He could not help it, he must give vent to his spleen in a few words at least. He therefore turned to the members of the choir, who stood behind him speechless and awe-struck.

"Why, the fellows sing as if they were trained nightingales," he growled. "Nobody can see that it costs them any effort or exertion. That is no art, but merely poor, plain nature."

Conrad von Burgsdorf had withdrawn to the most remote corner of the apartment, and there ensconced himself in a leather-covered chair. The cushion was not quite as hard as a board, and the back was comfortable. The sweet melody had probably reminded him of the cradle songs of his youth, and he could not resist his inclination to close his eyes a little and profit by the opportunity of enjoying a sweet afternoon nap.

The Lord Marshal Schwerin, too, seemed little edified by this overwhelming display of Italian art. His soft and handsome countenance twitched painfully at times, but when his eyes rested upon the Electress, behind whose chair he stood, he composed his features and assumed an air of gravity.

But the Princess's face was radiant with pleasure. And when the voices of the two singers now blended harmoniously in a scientific duet, and went off into shrill, long-winded trills, she turned with a deep sigh to the Elector, who sat between her and his wife, and whispered:

"I have never heard finer or better-cultivated voices. They are singers of the first rank, and it is a pleasure to listen to them."

"A pleasure, indeed," murmured the Elector, sighing involuntarily, for he thought that he could not often enjoy the pleasure of hearing these distinguished singers. Fifteen hundred dollars salary for both would be too great an extravagance for a prince with empty coffers. Sixteen hundred dollars would clothe a whole company of soldiers, and two singers would cost double that amount. The Elector of

Brandenburg, alas! had no funds at his own disposal, but must ever await the unwilling grant of money by his States. The poor, dependent Elector durst not expend such sums upon two foreign musicians!

"But all this must be altered," he said to himself, while the singers continued their marvelous trills and flourishes. "The Elector of Brandenburg must not always be restricted in his expenditures by the whims of the States; there must be fixed taxes, a regular excise, the sources of income must be determined, and by the Elector alone must be determined the disbursement of the income. Sovereign he will be within his own dominions—free, unlimited Sovereign! He will break the haughty spirit of the States, grind to dust and ashes the worn-out rights and privileges of the cities and States! They cleave to tradition and the past, would arrest the progress of the world, and so manage to retain the mastery, their Sovereign Prince being dependent upon their will, and the burgher and peasant kept in poverty and want. The States must be humbled, that the burghers may be exalted; old privileges must vanish, that the new era, the era of progress, may step into their place!"

Sing on, artists, trill and quaver away! The Elector does not hear; he thinks of the future, of all that destiny has ordained him to accomplish, and he ponders upon the means of accomplishing it!

But now the song is hushed, the grand duet from Berenice is finished. The silence rouses the Elector from his reverie and Conrad von Burgsdorf from his sweet slumbers. The latter starts and exclaims with animation: "Heavenly! Wonderfully fine!" The composer Krüger growls out a few unintelligible words, and the singers look with their large, sparkling black eyes at the Electoral pair, awaiting their acknowledgments and plaudits.

But the Elector sits there silent and gloomy; the Princess Ludovicka, too, is silent, for, however much she may have been charmed by the music, she remembers his request that the singers be not complimented. She is silent, therefore, and with a shrug of her shoulders turns to the Elector, whispering a few words in his ear. Then all at once this

painful silence is broken by the sweet, gentle voice of the Electress.

"What glorious music!" she says, with a charming smile, at the same time turning to her Lord Marshal von Schwerin. "What glorious music! how skillfully and tastefully these gentlemen have sung!"

The eyes of the two Italians flash with joy, for, as is her wont, the Electress has spoken in French, and they have understood.

"I beg, lord marshal," continued the Electress, "that you will present the two singers to me, that I may thank them in person."

The lord marshal hastens to conduct the singers to her. But the Princess Ludovicka leans over toward the Elector, who is looking at his wife in amazement and ill humor.

"Good heavens, dear cousin!" she whispers, "how is it possible that Louisa can so utterly have forgotten your wishes? How thoughtless to praise these people so loudly, when you bade us avoid any commendation of them whatever!"

"True, it proves little regard for my wishes. I thank *you*, cousin, for so graciously heeding my request."

Did the Electress hear these words of her husband? For a moment her clear blue eye rested upon him with singular seriousness, then were turned again to the singers, who stood before her and had just made her their profound obeisance. With distinct voice she praised their singing, and invited Otto von Schwerin to join her, which he did with alacrity.

"It is unheard of, it is abominable!" murmured the Princess, loud enough to be heard by the Elector, and he felt that Ludovicka was right, and in his heart was angry with his wife, who did not respect his wishes.

Suddenly, in the midst of her conversation with the singers, Louisa turned to her husband. "Your highness," she said joyfully, "I have just heard that these gentlemen have no engagement elsewhere, and would be inclined to stay with us and often gladden us with their delightful music."

"Indeed, that is a right pleasant prospect," murmured

the Elector, rising from his seat and with a forced smile approaching his wife. "The singers could stay with us, then, and dedicate to us their time and talents."

"Most gracious highness," asseverated the two artists, "we should esteem ourselves happy if your highness would condescend to take us into your service. Baron von Plötzen opened before us this lofty prospect in case we should meet the approval of your Electoral Highnesses."

"I know," said the Elector shortly. "I shall make known my decision presently, and meanwhile thank you for your music. Electress, accept my arm, and let me lead you back to your room."

He reverentially greeted Princess Ludovicka, gave a passing nod to the gentlemen, and with his wife left the music hall.

Princess Ludovicka, however, stepped across to the bow window where Burgsdorf stood. "My friend," she said, "we are ever nearing our goal, and unconsciously the Electress has become our ally. She provoked the Elector to-day by her want of tact, and I suspect that a precious matrimonial scene is going on in her apartments now. The Electress is very useful to us and promotes our plans."

"Your highness believes, then, that you will succeed in freeing the Elector from his wife's chains?" said Burgsdorf, in low tones. "Well, I should have to believe in magic if it were not so, for if one sees side by side a full crimson rose and a buttercup, and may take his choice, surely he will choose the rose and leave the buttercup to the cows."

"Burgsdorf, you are witty and ingenious, it seems," smiled the Princess.

"Most gracious Princess, it is only a reflection from your sunshine. But I must tell your royal highness that in other respects I am quite desperate."

"I, too, old man, for our plan advances but slowly, and I am being continually pressed and urged from Paris to bring matters to a point. For the rest, I am expecting a courier every day to give me the exact conditions which France wishes to impose. Come to me on the day after to-morrow; I will probably have received the dispatches then, and we can agree

better upon everything. But hush! there comes the lord marshal."

Meanwhile the Elector had silently led his wife back to her cabinet. When the door closed behind them, he turned to her with frowning brow.

"Electress," he asked, "had you entirely forgotten my desire that the singers should not be praised?"

"No," she replied, looking smilingly at him—"no, I had not forgotten it!"

"What!" cried the Elector, astonished, "you thought of it, and yet——"

"Yet I praised them, Frederick, and it seems to me they well deserved that praise. They are distinguished artists, and whatever your lips may say, in your heart you agree with me."

"That is not the point to be considered, Electress, but the question is whether——"

"I will tell you, Frederick, what the question is," interrupted the Electress kindly, laying her hand on Frederick's shoulder. "The case is simply this: The Elector would gladly have these singers in his choir, but finds them too dear, and would therefore pretend not to like them."

"Good heavens, Louisa! how do you know that, and what betrayed to you my inmost thoughts?"

"Your countenance—your dear, truthful countenance!" cried she, tenderly stroking his cheek with her small, white hand. "Just now, when you expressed your wish that I should not commend the singers, however much they might please me, I looked at you, and read in your features the reason of your wish. For see, Frederick, I am not learned nor witty; I am only a poor, simple woman, possessing but one faculty, which no one shares with me. I can read your countenance, and know how to decipher the thoughts stamped upon your forehead. By the light of love my heart has studied your whole nature, dived into its intricacies, and learned the interpretation of every light shadow. So I knew directly that my lord's treasury was again empty through the contumacy of the States, and that therefore my husband wished to dismiss the singers, who nevertheless had come

by his own desire. They demand too high a salary, do they not?"

"Yes, indeed, you have guessed, my 'cute little Louisa," said the Elector, whose face began to brighten.

"It was not such a very difficult thing to do for a woman who loves you," said she softly. "But since, fortunately, I have no States to refuse me money, and my finances are in a very flourishing condition, so that I can afford to make an extra expenditure, I have determined to indulge myself by engaging the singers whom your highness was about to scorn."

"O Louisa!" cried the Elector, "I begin to comprehend now, and your goodness makes me feel heartily ashamed of myself."

"How ashamed? And what are you saying about my goodness? Ah, I understand! My husband imagines that I would offer him my casket, that he might take out enough money to pay the wages of these singers! But you are mistaken, Sir Elector; I have had no such rash idea, and it has never entered my head to lend you this money. For I know you, and know what would be the end of it. Instead of appropriating the borrowed sum to its destined object you would have equipped new soldiers and still discharged the singers."

"Ah, Louisa, dear Louisa, how well you know me!"

"Yes, indeed, I know you well, sir, and therefore will take good care not to open my casket to you. My money would be gone, and still no music, for the singers would have been dismissed before the doors had closed behind me. But I am charmed with this Italian singing. It is so different from anything I have ever heard before, going so deep into the heart, so sweet, so graceful. In short, I must hear these singers often, and therefore beg your permission, my dear husband, to engage both for our choir, provided that you think they would be content with a salary of eight hundred dollars apiece."

"They have never aspired to so much as that," cried the Elector quickly; "they only ask for seven hundred and fifty dollars each."

"Ah! my husband, how exact your knowledge is, as if you had actually designed to engage them! But I do not

mean that these artists shall be torn from me again. I insist upon having my wish. It shall not be believed of the Electress of Brandenburg that she has a taste for no higher music than the tinkling of cowbells and the lowing of cattle, or that a sacred choral goes to her heart more than the airs and duets of these great Italian artists. Oh, no; I, too, know what is fine and exalted, and in proof thereof I now engage these two signors. I crave your permission, most gracious Elector. Allow me to commission my Lord Marshal von Schwerin to treat with these artists and to conclude the engagement with them."

"No further transactions will be needed, Electress, for they have already made their stipulations, and Baron von Plötzen made the contract with them in Dresden, provided that they could gain our approbation."

"That they could gain *your* approbation, you mean, Frederick. But if I were to accept those conditions now, Elector, everybody would believe and say that your highness had engaged these two singers for the chapel, and there would be great grumbling and talking among the States. They would say, 'If the Elector has money enough to engage these Italian nightingales, it is by no means necessary to open new sources of income to him, and we shall take good care not to grant him the tax which he asks of us because he maintains that he has no money wherewith to clothe his militia. You see, sir, it will not do for the transactions to be carried on in your name; on the contrary, they must be conducted in my name, by *my* lord marshal, for at present I alone can allow myself such an indulgence. Thank God, we do not hold here to community of goods, so that it may well happen that my husband has no money while I am wallowing in wealth. I draw a splendid annuity from Holland, the Electorate of Brandenburg has also assigned me a handsome grant, and then I have besides the revenues from my estate of Boetzow. You know, twice every week I send the produce of my farm to Berlin, and sell in the market butter, milk, and cheese, and that of course brings in quite considerable sums."

"Not that it covers in the hundredth part the expenditures

which your highness has incurred at Boetzow," smilingly remarked the Elector.

"Maybe so," continued the Electress; "but I am happily not called to render an account of this to the States, and none of them have the shamelessness to question me as to the way in which I spend my means. I may therefore dare to do what you may not, sir. And then reflect that, as you told me yourself, the talk at a recent sitting of your privy council fell upon the choir, and that the privy councilors thought that it would be necessary for your highness to economize in that direction, and retrench in your expenditures. A goodly sum might be saved if your highness would dispense with a choir. You also promised so to do. What would be the impression, then, if you were now to engage two costly singers? No, no; I alone can enjoy this luxury; everybody shall know that it is I who does it, and for that reason I so shocked the organist Krüger to-day, and, to the just indignation of my dear cousin, praised the two artists so extravagantly, laying myself out to do them honor. I would have everybody know that *I* engaged the singers, and that they are to be paid out of *my* treasury. Schwerin shall therefore close the contract with them this very day, provided that you grant me the permission I now humbly sue for."

"Louisa," said the Elector, laying both hands upon his wife's shoulders and looking at her with fervent glances, "do you really believe that I am deceived by all these words, and by your raptures over these Italian singers? Do you suppose that I understand you no better, and do not appreciate the tender, magnanimous soul which would veil itself under words and yet can not? Thank you, my gentle, faithful wife, thank you! You would give me pleasure while pretending to be thinking only of yourself, and depreciating your act as if it were of no value. O Louisa! contrasted with you, I feel humbled and right ashamed, hardly daring to lift my sinful eyes to your purity and loveliness. I repent, beloved, and confess my fault! I was ill humored and angry with you, not understanding immediately why you acted as you did. I fancied myself justified in finding fault with you, and my spirit was stirred against you. Ah! how little does man

know the depth and tenderness of a woman's heart, and how much more trustful, noble, and magnanimous are you women when you love! Forgive me, Louisa, please forgive me."

"I have nothing to forgive in you," said she, smiling, her voice trembling slightly. "But if you think so, I will tell you how you can make prompt and ample amends."

"How, Louisa?"

"In firm, decided words give me leave to engage these wonderful Italian singers, permit the affair to be transacted by my lord marshal in *my* name, and allow their appointment as members of your choir to be made by myself."

"Well, my extravagant wife, I grant your wish—on certain conditions, however."

"Name your conditions, Frederick!"

"In the first place, you must give me a kiss in token of your forgiveness. Say, do you accept my first condition?"

"Not until you have named the others."

"I have only one more, and here it is: I give my consent to your request, and you can take the Italians into our service in your name. But you must first, openly and candidly, answer this question: Do you actually find such exalted delight in listening to these artists? Do opera music and singing please you?"

"What a question!" replied the Electress, with a pretty pout. "Do you take me for a barbarian who can not be pleased with what must throw everybody into ecstasies and exalt one to the seventh heaven? Do you esteem me so utterly unpolished and devoid of taste as not to comprehend the wonderful powers displayed by these musicians, the purity of their tones, and the flexibility of their organs? And then, that music, that passionate, glowing, melting music, which affects the mind so strangely; how wholly different is the effect produced by listening to a hymn or sacred song, by which the heart feels touched, and the eyes grow moist with emotion! By this music we are not, indeed, made to weep, and the feelings are not touched, but we are excited; it is as when one has drunk a glass of heavy wine, which mounts to the head and causes a slight dizziness."

"And afterward follows a slight intoxication, eh? Hark,

Louisa! you have not given me a candid answer, and fulfilled one of my conditions. I will now tell you that I actually wonder at these singers, and it will give me genuine pleasure to hear this new opera music right often, and to be a little intoxicated by it. But now, answer me honestly, how do you like this style of song and music?"

The Electress laughingly flung her arm around him.

"Abominable!" she whispered, "perfectly abominable!"

The Elector laughed, too, and, while he ardently pressed Louisa to his heart, he took from her lips the fulfillment of his first condition. And now, both conditions being fulfilled, the Signors Grimani and Altiera, by command of the Electress, were engaged for her choir, and were the first Italian singers who electrified Berlin by their birdlike voices, and excited the rapture of the public.

VII.—Jesus my Confidence.

"It must be, yes, it must be!" cried the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine. "This affair must at last be decided!"

"Most heartily I second the wish," sighed Burgsdorf. "If we do not now, through your highness, once more gain the Elector and hold him fast, he will be entirely lost to us, and the dear old customs of his country, and every vestige of ancient law and order, will be irretrievably destroyed. But the Electress alone is to blame for all these things. She introduced these new ideas into the land, and everything here will be transformed through her influence. The good, honest, merry Markers are to be changed into slow, dull, busy Dutchmen, knowing nothing but how to pray and work. Our sandy soil is to be suddenly converted into a Dutch garden, and all is to be brought about with as much nicety and delicacy as if men were no longer men and women no longer women. Most gracious highness, aid me, I beseech you—save my Elector for me, preserve to me his friendship, for otherwise I am lost. He used always to call me his old friend, often his father, but

for weeks it has been no longer so, and my heart is well-nigh bursting; I am becoming desperate."

"To what end that comic acting, my dear old man?" asked the Princess, smiling. "Why would you persuade me that nought but concern for the Elector's lost friendship makes you desperate? Rather speak out honestly, and say that you dread losing your influence over the Elector and being supplanted by the Electress. Everybody struggles for life, and he who has been accustomed to dwell in sunshine and in the full splendor of daylight can not all at once vegetate in night and darkness. And you shall not either. You are and shall remain the all-powerful friend and minister of the Elector, and to that end I will sustain you, as in return you must stand by *me*, that we may compass all that France desires. You know what are the conditions upon which France promises you an annuity for life of twenty thousand livres, secured to you by bond?"

"For Heaven's sake, your highness," murmured Burgsdorf, casting an anxious glance through the whole apartment, "speak lower! These old, crumbling walls might have holes in them, and other ears than mine might hear your words!"

"Dear me, they are much too honorable and too artless for such things here!" cried the Princess, shrugging her shoulders. "There is no ear of Dionysius here, and you may shout out the deepest secrets of your heart in this old barrack without being heard by anybody. The Elector and Electress live in the other wing, and on a different story, and I have the honor of being the sole occupant of this side of the castle. Besides, I purposely came with you into my dressing room, because this chamber has no mode of egress save through my sitting room and the little arras door there leading into my maid's chamber. Nobody could hear us but my servant, and I gave her leave of absence to-day, and she has gone to Boetzow. The Electress also went there early this morning, accompanied only by her lord marshal, who is quite a factotum with her, being at the same time architect of the new palace at Boetzow and inspector of her grounds. The Elector stayed here to read Shakespeare with me, and afterward the Italian singers are to come and we shall make music together."

"That is to say, your highness has conquered, and Rinaldo wears the chains of the fairest Armida."

"The Elector is indeed affectionate to me, and I now hope that success is about to crown our united efforts. I shall do to-day what I have done never before. I shall introduce a little politics into our conversation, and for the first time hint at an alliance with France. To-morrow morning, at the sitting of the privy council, you will advocate this alliance, and so conduct matters that the Elector shall commission you to go to Paris and treat with the King's ministers. You have your instructions and know what to demand and what to concede. In some sort France recognizes you as her minister at the Brandenburg court, and pays you a pension for life. The document securing this to you must be here very soon, together with a few other important papers, which Cardinal Mazarin will send me. I expected the courier to-day, and am astonished at his non-arrival."

"The roads are bad, and the recent rains have made them much worse, so that the courier may well have been detained."

"True, and yet he always comes at the right time. Therefore, you know what you have to do. We must now hasten the crisis, and I trust that the Elector is ripe for our plans. So the watchword is: Union with France, opposition to the Emperor of Germany, to Sweden, and to Poland. The Elector pledges himself not to give his vote at the election at Frankfort to the son of the Emperor of Germany, but to exert himself to secure the election of the son of the Saxon electoral house as King of the Romans, and to give *him* his vote. If it comes to a declaration of war between Austria and France, the Elector is to side with the latter, furnishing auxiliary troops and supporting the French troops in all their undertakings. In return, France guarantees to the Elector his possessions on the Rhine, as well as the dukedom of Prussia, and pays him annually a million livres. You know all now. Go, then, and——

"What was that?" exclaimed the Princess, starting and lifting her eyes to the ceiling of her room. "Did you hear nothing?"

"Your highness," muttered Burgsdorf, "the rafter seemed

to me to creak, and only see how dust and lime are sifting through the boards nailed across the ceiling."

"Good heavens! what if anybody should be up there?" whispered the Princess. "Suppose that we have been overheard?"

"Will your highness condescend to dismiss me?" murmured Burgsdorf. "I will go and see whether anybody is up there, and if I catch him——"

"Hush, hush!" whispered the Princess; "just listen. There is that creaking again, and a whole cloud of dust comes pouring down through the boards. Dear me, how anxious I feel, and if I thought that the Elector—— Oh, no, no, that is utterly impossible! How could it have occurred to him to climb up there, and why should he wish to play the spy upon us? No, no, it must have been a rat running about there."

"A rat could not make the rafters creak, nor raise a cloud of dust," sighed Burgsdorf. "I am afraid, your highness, really and truly, I am afraid, and I feel as if the door might open and the devil enter in bodily shape! Dismiss me, your highness, dismiss me!"

"Go, Burgsdorf! And to-morrow be clever with your tongue, think of your French minister's salary, and remember that I shall soon present you the promised document signed by Mazarin!"

She nodded a condescending farewell to Burgsdorf, who was struck perfectly dumb, and, as soon as he had disappeared, went into her reception room. On the threshold she paused, once more looking back at the half-obliterated angels and the boards on the ceiling above.

"It can not have been anything," she said, drawing a breath of relief. "Old Burgsdorf is a coward, and I myself am a timid little fool. Courage, Ludovicka, courage! Your past is to be avenged, the tears of your youth are to be dried, while the tears of another shall be made to flow. Yes, *she* shall weep as I have wept, and I shall drive her from the place which belongs to me!

"Will you succeed, Ludovicka?" she asked of herself, as she stepped to the mirror and gazed at herself with searching glances. "Are you still young, beautiful, and lovely enough

to supplant this pretty young woman? It is true that she is more beautiful, yet it is only the tame beauty of virtuous women. But in these black eyes, which I see reflected in the glass, gleams something of the fires of hell, and the heart of him who looks into them must be consumed. Did not Cardinal Mazarin often call me a demon, and, when I recently took leave of him, did he not say: 'You are a *diavolezza*, and a little imp dances upon the tip of every one of your fingers. Go now and enchant the Elector!' Yes, yes, I will enchant him, and have done so already. Drop by drop I have infused into him the poison, the bitter poison of jealousy, and also poured in drop by drop the sweet balsam of love. He is jealous of *her* and he loves *me*. Rejoice then, Ludovicka, rejoice, the great work will succeed, and ere a year has expired you will be Electress of Brandenburg."

A knock was heard at the door, and the Elector's voice asked, "May I come in?"

Forthwith the Princess's countenance assumed an expression of radiant joy. She flew to the door, tore it open, and bade him welcome with tender words. He kissed her hand, and took his seat on the sofa at her side.

"How snug and quiet it is here!" he said, "and what a comfort it is amid the vexatious cares of government to look forward to being consoled by your conversation and amiable presence!"

"My presence must soon be changed into absence. The dream is drawing to a close, Frederick, and a bitter, painful awakening will follow."

"No, no, Ludovicka, you must not leave me. It is such a happiness to be near you, you must not deprive me of it yet. Think of the beautiful fable of Ægeria and Numa Pompilius; be my Ægeria, charming Princess."

"Ægeria was the counselor of Numa Pompilius, and he consulted with her concerning affairs of state. You see, Frederick, your comparison does not hold good, for when would you do me the honor of asking my advice about such serious matters?"

"I shall do so directly, my Ægeria, and this very day you must give me your advice. For only see, like Hercules, I

stand at a cross way, with two beautiful, enticing women beckoning to me. The name of one is France, the name of the other Austria. Just to-day I have received dispatches containing important tidings from my ambassadors at Vienna and Paris. The Emperor of Germany informs me that France has devised a scheme for my ruin, and would league herself with Sweden and Poland against me. France has allotted my dukedom of Prussia to Poland, which in return will cede Liesland to the crown of Sweden. I am to be quieted and appeased by a subsidy.* And this, the Emperor informs me, is the plan which the French ambassador, Count Chanut, has proposed at Stockholm, and which he recommends as a means for holding in check the house of Austria and the German princes." †

"I do not believe it!" cried Ludovicka, with animation. "I know Count Chanut; he is much too clever a diplomatist, much too wise a statesman, to make such wild, hazardous proposals. Besides, I know that the count esteems and reveres you, declares you to be the noblest most gifted Prince in Europe, and prophesies for you a brilliant future. No, my dear friend, trust not to these Austrian innuendoes. Austria meditates your ruin, and will never contribute to making Brandenburg great and powerful."

"That is true," said the Elector thoughtfully. "Austria is very jealous of her power. She would gladly re-establish her old supremacy, and act as if Emperor and empire were on the same footing as before the Peace of Westphalia."

"And did you not say, my friend Numa Pompilius, that you had also dispatches from your ambassador at Paris?"

"Yes, my Ægeria. Herr von Jena writes me of a very important conference which he has had with Cardinal Mazarin. His eminence informs me, through my ambassador, that Austria is intriguing against me, and has suggested to Spain to prolong the contest in the Netherlands in order to possess herself of my Rhenish provinces. Lorraine is to furnish Spain the support of his troops in this undertaking, and if I march there and offer battle, then the Emperor of

* Droysen, History of Prussian Politics, vol. iii, part 3, p. 61.

† Droysen, the same.

Germany will empower his son-in-law, the King of Poland, to take possession again of my dukedom of Prussia and invest it with his troops. In the name of the King, the cardinal now offers me his assistance in opposing such traitorous schemes. He invites me to enter into a league with the King of France, but at the same time a league against the Emperor of Germany. He offers me money, troops, possession of lands, and asks nothing in return but that I shall become a faithful ally to France and assist the King in all his wars. Now say, Ægeria, whom am I to follow, which alliance shall I accept?"

"The alliance with the King of France!" cried Ludovicka enthusiastically. "The alliance of the noblest, greatest, mightiest state in Europe! Beware of Austria, for she is your rival. Trust France, for she is your friend. She promises you soldiers, money, and possession of lands—that is to say, she promises you a great and glorious future. Accept it, Frederick William, reject not the laurels which France offers you."

"Thank you, Ægeria," said the Elector, smiling. "You are indeed a fiery counselor and a zealous statesman. But a truce to politics now; they do not quite become the lips of my sweet cousin. It is much sweeter and more attractive to hear them speak of poetry and love."

"Of love, Frederick?" said the Princess. Her glowing glances sunk deep into the Elector's eyes. "Would that I could read to the bottom of your heart, my friend. I should like to know if recollections of the past are inscribed there, whether they have revived within you. O Frederick! I should like to know if your old love has grown young again." She softly laid her head against his shoulder.

"Hush, hush!" said he gently; "lift not the veil from my heart. There are secrets which may be confided to none, hardly to one's self; and to what purpose should I do so, Ludovicka? Am I not married?"

She lifted her head from his shoulder and looked at him with a fascinating smile. "Are your soul and heart wedded or only your hand, Frederick?"

He avoided her glance and turned his head aside.

"Only my hand, Ludovicka."

She uttered a low cry, and with a passionate movement flung both her arms around his neck.

"Then you are not married," she whispered; "then you will break this bond, in which your soul and heart have no part!"

"I shall separate from her," murmured the Elector, trembling.

"Are you not already separated from her, since she loves you no longer? Have you not a right to separate from her, since she is childless?"

"But she loves me, Ludovicka."

"No; she loves Herr Otto von Schwerin. Good heavens, Frederick, are you blind?—is that a secret to you which all the world knows? Have you not remarked the glowing love existing between the chaste and modest Electress and her noble, virtuous lord marshal?"

The Elector started. "Serpent, O serpent!" he cried, in unutterable wrath. Then, shuddering, he clasped both hands before his face and sighed aloud.

The face of the Princess was radiant, and her glowing eyes were fixed upon the Elector with an expression of demoniacal glee.

Mazarin was indeed right; she was a *diavolezza*, and upon the tip of each of her fingers danced a little imp.

"No, she does not love you, Frederick William," she whispered. "She deceives you and laughs in her sleeve at her unsuspecting husband. At this very hour, while you are here with me, she is with him again at Boetzow—in tender solitude, in sweet retirement with her lover!"

The Elector jumped up and let his hands fall from before his face, which she saw was pale and colorless. But his eyes flashed and sparkled with excitement and indignation. "I will go!" he said with hollow voice. "I will surprise them! Hush, not a word, Ludovicka; do not detain me. An end must be put to this, a sudden end. Farewell, Ludovicka, farewell!"

And with rapid strides he left the room.

Princess Ludovicka looked after him with triumphant glances. "I have conquered," she exulted, and springing

to the mirror, she bowed to the reflection of her own image, whispering, "I congratulate you, Electress of Brandenburg. I congratulate you!"

Outside the door of her apartment stood the Elector. With flashing eyes, lifting his clinched fists to heaven, he whispered fiercely: "Serpent, O serpent! I will have my revenge, yes, I will have my revenge! I must away—away to Boetzow!"

He hastened down the corridor, entered his own apartments, and bade the chamberlain order the carriage without delay. A quarter of an hour later it rolled out of the castle gate. The Elector had left for Boetzow.

. . . . . .

The Electress Louisa Henrietta had just completed her inspection of the cowhouses and dairy rooms. She had regarded with peculiar pleasure the fine brown cows sent to her from The Hague recently by her mother, and had just entered the little room next the dairy. In the window stood the writing desk, which she had kept in her counting room at The Hague, and everything was arranged exactly as it had been there. Three years ago, when the Elector had presented Boetzow to her, he had prepared for her the sweet surprise of finding all the farming arrangements exactly modeled after her own little establishment near the Buitenhof, and even the dairymaids and stewardesses whom she had left there she had found again when the Elector for the first time had taken her to Boetzow.

To-day was Saturday, when the weekly accounts were rendered. Louisa Henrietta, therefore, drew forth the account books from her desk, and with grave demeanor examined the papers lying before her. In the midst of this employment she was interrupted by the entrance of a blooming, contented-looking peasant girl, clad in the Dutch costume.

"Most gracious lady!" she said, in the good, broad dialect of her native land, "Dappled Brown has just calved and given birth to two calves at once."

"I am pleased to hear it, Trude," said the Electress, nodding kindly upon her. "Tend the little creatures carefully,

that they may thrive well, for you know Dappled Brown is our best cow."

"I shall do so, most gracious lady, for I love Dappled Brown very much. Do you know why?"

"No, Trude, I do not indeed."

"It is," said Trude, casting down her eyes and in confusion pulling at her white apron, "it is because Dappled Brown reminds me of old times. Do you remember, gracious lady, that time, six years ago, when we were at home? I just sat before Big Betty, Dappled Brown's mother, and the calf which is now such a fine cow had just been taken away from her mother three days before, and the cow gave such quantities of milk. I just sat and milked her when my Princess came by, and looked at me with her beautiful eyes until I felt my cheeks tingle with shame, and she said to me with her soft voice, which went like a dagger to my heart, 'Trude, I am surprised that Big Betty gave less milk yesterday than the days before.' Do you remember it still, Electress?"

"I remember it," replied Louisa Henrietta softly. "The bad stewardess had led you astray, she had tempted you to do evil."

"But you, my most gracious Princess—you were the angel who saved me!" cried Trude, with streaming eyes, taking the Electress's robe in her hands and pressing it to her lips. "You saved me from the evil eye and the wicked sorceress. 'Only pray right piously and be good and true,' you said, 'and no evil eye will have any further power over you and your cows.'"

"And you have prayed piously, and again become good and true," said the Electress kindly. "You are my best stewardess, and all that you touch prospers. See, Trude, this is the blessing that follows purity of heart and uprightness of conduct. I have just looked over your accounts, and am delighted with your order and punctuality. In return I will make you a present. Dappled Brown is Big Betty's daughter, and you have loved her for the sake of your recollections. I now give you her two calves. You are to bring them up for yourself and your future household; for well I know that Michael and you love one another and would

like to marry. One year hence, Trude, the wedding shall take place, and the grandchildren of Big Betty shall occupy the first stalls in your stable."

Trude cried and laughed for joy, and blushed until she was as red as a cherry, and looked toward the door as if she would like to go out, but dared not before having been dismissed by the Electress.

"Go now, Trude," said Louisa, smiling. "Your heart will burst if you can not speedily unburden it to Michael. Send Bailiff Sturm in to me."

Trude hurried off, and immediately afterward the bailiff entered.

"Listen," said the Electress in her broken German; "I am not perfectly satisfied with you. You must keep my books more strictly and systematically. Last week they again sent money to me in Berlin without particularizing whether it was for butter, milk, or cheese. This I must know, that I may make the entry in my own book, where I mark down exactly all my receipts and expenditures." *

"Most gracious Electress," reverentially answered the bailiff, "I beg pardon. Hereafter I will note everything down with exactness."

"And see," continued the Electress, "that the masons and carpenters are more diligent. Everything is going on so slowly. The courtyard is only half paved, although it should have been finished last week. The carp ponds, too, are not in order; but first of all must be made the kitchen well, that the water for washing the butter may not have to be fetched so far, but be right cold. Attend to all this, and when I come again next Saturday, let me at least find the well done. Where is the gardener?"

"He has gone with the lord marshal to the new garden."

"Then I shall go there, too," said the Electress, rising from her seat. "If any one asks for me, and wishes to speak to me on pressing affairs pertaining to the farm, you will know where to find me."

She nodded kindly to the bailiff, hung her little key basket on her arm, and left the farm buildings to go into the

* The Electress's own words. See Orlich, book ii.

garden. But she did not seem so cheerful to-day as was her wont; her beautiful blue eyes did not look around with the lively interest they were accustomed to manifest when she was in her dear garden at Boetzow. Her cheeks, too, were paler than usual, and no mild and gentle smile beamed to-day upon her countenance. Nor was her step so lithe and elastic as it usually was, and her head, that used to sit so proudly and gracefully upon the slender throat was to-day cast down. She saw not the flowers which bloomed at her side, she heard not the twittering of birds in the shrubbery. Her eye was turned inward, and she only heeded the low, sad whisperings within her breast.

"All has become so different," she said mournfully to herself. "He no longer troubles himself about me; he has only sympathy and attention for *her*. Oh, my God! what have I not suffered during these last horrible weeks! I see now how she encircled him with her nets, how she brought into play every art of her bewitching nature in order to attract him. Ah! and it is so natural that she succeeds, for she is witty, wise, and beautiful, while I am so insignificant, so uninteresting compared with her! Yet I love him so much I would give my life to insure his happiness, and I have always believed that true, heavenly love, having divine energy within itself, had power to retain the heart to which it had devoted itself. But it is not so, alas! it is not so! I have not the power of keeping constant to myself the precious affections of his heart. It is my fault, I know it, and I have nobody to reproach for it but myself. And yet, it is such grief, such bitter grief!"

Thus she walked along, absorbed in melancholy thought, and heeding not the outer world. She heard not the rolling of carriage wheels, saw not that her Lord Marshal Otto von Schwerin was coming up the long avenue to meet her, and only his words of salutation roused her from her sad reveries.

"Ah! there you are, Schwerin," she said, kindly offering him her hand. "They told me that you had gone with the gardener to where they are laying off the new grounds, and I meant to join you there."

"Your highness has passed by without observing them,"

replied Otto von Schwerin, whose soft intelligent eyes rested most regretfully upon his mistress's pale countenance.

"Did I, indeed? Did I pass by? I believe I was a little absorbed by my thoughts."

"I trust that those thoughts were not of a sorrowful nature."

"Not exactly. I was not utterly gloomy or out of tune. There is comfort for everything, and all things must turn out for the best to those who love God. No, I have no time for repinings; I have so much to think about as regards my housekeeping and the many improvements and buildings I am projecting here. Come, Schwerin, let us look at the carp ponds, and then show me the new bower of roses which the gardener has erected after a drawing of mine. I hope he copied it right closely, for I attach great importance to it. You must know, the original of this bower, of which mine is to be a copy, is in the park at The Hague, and there I was sitting when I first saw the Elector again after many years. Come, Schwerin, let us go to the bower."

With light, graceful step she walked cheerfully along at her marshal's side.

She had not heard the rolling of the carriage which stopped before the little palace of Boetzow. The Elector alighted, and when he heard from the lackeys who hurried out to greet him that the Electress was in the garden, he forthwith repaired there himself.

"Let no one announce my coming to the Electress," was his order to the lackeys. "I want to surprise her highness. All of you then stay where you are."

He proceeded to the garden and walked rapidly down the avenue. But Bailiff Sturm had caught sight of him, and hastened to the Elector.

"Your Electoral Highness," he said, "the Electress bade me say that she had gone to the new part of the garden."

"Alone?"

"No, the lord marshal is also there."

"Good! Stay here, I will look for the Electress myself."

He entered the walk, which led to the new plantations.

But he was little acquainted with the way, and knew not whither to turn.

"Well, it is not the enchanted garden of Armida," he said, shrugging his shoulders, "and I can not fail to come out right at last."

Thus he advanced straight into the little forest of noble young trees and beautiful shrubbery. All at once it seemed to him as if he heard not far from him a low voice singing. He stood still and listened. Yes, he was not mistaken; it was singing, in a low, half-suppressed voice, and he knew the voice. It was that of the Electress.

He followed the direction of this voice, and made a path for himself through the thicket, but cautiously, without making a noise. He reached a little clearing in the woods, and found himself in the rear of a lofty arbor, built of wire work, in the Chinese style. The rosebushes had not yet grown tall and thick enough to obstruct the view of the interior, and he saw his wife sitting in the arbor upon a pretty rustic bench. Her hands were folded over her knee, and with a gentle smile she was looking up at Otto von Schwerin, who stood before her, with a book in his hand. She sang a beautiful, sacred melody in a low, subdued voice, and Schwerin looked in his book and nodded from time to time as if approvingly.

The Elector crept nearer, and now stood not far from the back of the arbor.

"Do you not think the melody suits the words?" asked the Electress, who had ceased to sing.

"Yes, it suits perfectly, your highness; there is something deeply solemn and touching about it."

"It is not of my own composition," said Louisa, "so that I can not appropriate your praise to myself. I heard it sung at Cleves, years ago, by passing pilgrims. The beautiful, solemn strain made a deep impression upon my heart, and immediately the wish stirred within me to have beautiful words to suit the beautiful melody. Therefore I sang the air for you, and asked you to compose a poem to suit it."

"That is to say, your highness, you suggested the substance of the poem; you gave me the whole train of thought, designated the contents of each verse, and I have done noth-

ing more than translate into German and rhyme the pious, noble words which you repeated to me in French. You, Electress, are properly the composer of both melody and song."

"No, no, indeed, you do me too much honor, and I can not accept it. But please read me your pretty song once more."

"Your highness, it is your own song. And what title will your grace give it?"

"Let the first line constitute its title," said the Electress, after a short reflection. "I asked you to begin with those words, because I uttered them a few weeks ago, at a moment full of significance to me. 'Jesus is my confidence,' so our song commences, and so shall it be called. Now let me hear it."

The Elector had approached still nearer, and if Louisa had turned only a little aside she would have seen through the wire work his noble countenance and his beautiful eyes resting upon her with an expression of infinite love. But she looked only at the friend who stood before her, and only listened to the song which he now began to read:

"Jesus is my confidence,
My life, my Saviour now.
Knowing this, should not my heart
In sweet contentment bow?
What though death's long night draws near,
Still my heart shall know no fear.

"Jesus, *He*, my Saviour lives,
I, too, shall then see life—
Be where my Redeemer is
When past this mortal strife.
Leaves our Head one feeble limb
Which is drawn not after Him?

"By the bond of hope and love
Close linked to Him am I;
When the last dread summons comes,
By faith I'll know him nigh.
Lifted up on victory's wing,
Death! oh, where will be thy sting?

"The poem is only finished so far," said Otto von Schwerin, "but your highness can see plainly that I have exactly followed your words and ideas, really doing nothing more than transposing them into rhyme. The following stanza I have done scarcely anything to, for your grace's words naturally shaped themselves into verse, only needing a little alteration for the sake of the rhyme. Be pleased to listen, your highness:

"Glory soon shall crown the saint
Who here but weeps and sighs,
Earthly we must sink into the grave,
But heavenly shall we rise.
Here my body must decay
There immortal bloom alway."

"That is very pretty, and to me a deep wellspring of comfort and refreshment seems to lie hid in those words. Let us now try to unite the text with the music, and then we shall add it to the collection of songs which I requested you to arrange for me. I think that we have enough songs now, and that they will form a pretty little book. You must get them printed for me, Schwerin, and this collection will be a memorial which, perhaps, when the childless Electress Louisa shall be no more, may serve to remind my dear lord and Elector of me in dark, gloomy days, and probably console him with the very words which have consoled me. Have three copies printed for me, then, Schwerin, right handsomely and durably on thick parchment. One copy for my dear lord, one for my own comfort and edification, and the third for you, dear friend, to serve as a memento of me when I am no more."

"O most gracious Electress!" said Schwerin, with a voice choked by emotion, "you make me sorry and glad at the same time. You gladden me by the glorious present which you bequeath me, and sadden me by speaking of your death. God forbid that so heavy a calamity should overtake us all——"

"Hush, my friend, hush, it shall be as God chooses. For, as my song says, so it is. Dust I am and unto dust must some day return. Be not angry with me on account of my melan-

choly. I have actually no ground or motive for it. It is most likely nothing but physical weakness, for I must acknowledge that I have not felt entirely well for some time. I suffer! But it will pass away, and all will be well again. But now, dear friend, let us once more sing that beautiful song, and try whether it is well adapted to the air. You know the words by heart, so give me the writing, that I may read from the paper."

Schwerin handed her the manuscript, and with full, sonorous voice, carried away by inward enthusiasm, the Electress sang to her beautiful melody:

"Jesus is my confidence,
My life, my Saviour now.
Knowing this, should not my heart
In sweet contentment bow?
What though death's long night draws near,
Still my heart shall know no fear."

"Still my heart shall know no fear!" repeated a loud, joyful voice behind her, and her heart quivered with rapture, for she had recognized that beloved voice. She saw his tall, splendid figure, saw him enter the arbor, approach her with radiant countenance, and extend his arms toward her.

Gently she arose from her seat and tottered toward him, his arm encircled her waist, and she leaned her head against his true, warm heart, full of reverence and joy unutterable.

Schwerin had tried to sing on, not wishing to disturb their meeting, and hoping that the harmony of the pious song might fall upon their ears like a benediction from on high. But the heart of the friend was weaker than his will, and in the midst of a strain commenced the lord marshal broke off, and with a blissful smile surveyed the princely pair, and yet saw nothing, for tears dimmed his eyes.

Not a word was spoken. What could words have said at that hallowed moment? The Elector held his beloved wife in his arms, and she leaned on him in the blissful consciousness that on his breast was her true, her inalienable home.

VIII.—Retribution.

It was early on the following day. The Elector had returned the evening before with his wife from Orangeburg to Berlin, but Princess Ludovicka had in vain waited for a message from him. The Elector had retired to his own apartments, and was pacing his cabinet, revolving grave and serious thoughts. "An end must be made of this thing," he said to himself. "Louisa is grieved and distressed. She deems it possible that this intriguer, this heartless coquette, may at last ensnare my heart. And why pursue further this miserable game? I know everything now, yes, the whole abominable tissue of avarice, cunning, and villainy, and this day, yes, this very day, I shall break with both of them! I shall unmask their nefarious schemes, and make up to the Electress for all that she has suffered."

A low knock at the door interrupted him, and Chamberlain Künkel entered. "Most gracious highness," he said, "the secretary of the Dutch ambassador, Count von Brandtrup, implores an audience. He has dispatches to deliver to your highness from The Hague!"

"Ah! at last! at last!" exclaimed the Elector joyfully. "Admit the gentleman without delay."

Kunkel opened the door, and the Elector eagerly beckoned this representative of the Dutch legation to approach.

"Do you bring me dispatches from Holland?" he asked —"a letter from the Princess Amelia?"

"Yes, most gracious sir! I have herewith the honor of delivering it to you. But at the same time I beg leave to present a most urgent petition in the name of the ambassador, Count von Brandtrup."

"Speak, sir; what is it?" asked the Elector, at the same time breaking the seal of the letter and unfolding the paper.

"The count was ordered by the Princess Regent to ask your highness if, the same day that the Princess's letter reaches you, you will allow him the honor of waiting upon your Electoral Highnesses, for the purpose of communicating to you some tidings concerning family affairs. Accord-

ingly the count asks if he may be allowed the high privilege of being received in an hour from this time, without any ceremony? The Princess Amelia also desires that the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine of the Palatinate be present at this reception, but no one else."

"Eh! That is quite a strange and mysterious message," said the Elector. "Meanwhile the Princess's wish shall be a law to me, and all shall be done as her grace directs. I shall expect the count in an hour, and notify the Electress and Princess Ludovicka in time. We shall receive the count's visit in the Electress's cabinet, and the ambassador may be introduced without further ceremony by our chamberlain, who will await him in the antechamber. Bear this message to the count, and present my compliments to him."

"And now," said the Elector, after the secretary had withdrawn—"now for my prudent mother-in-law's letter."

The Princess Amelia had written a long, significant letter to the Elector, in which politics occupied an important place. But this time family affairs interested Frederick William still more, and he read several times the portion of the letter devoted to them:

"Now, as regards the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine, I had already heard from Paris, through reliable sources, that this intriguing individual had insinuated herself into Mazarin's good graces, and become a political emissary of the cardinal. I had also been informed that she had been sent to your court to induce you by her wiles and arts to form an alliance with France and forsake your present policy. She is a person of many gifts, well skilled in the arts of seduction, and before I received your letter I had planned to expose her to you, and once and forever to procure my dear Louisa rest from her evil machinations. I can imagine how she revived the story of your youthful love, pretending to have always lived upon and been consumed by that pure and innocent passion. But I determined to unmask her, that she might flee from your house as the devil flees at sight of the holy Cross. So I devised my plan and have happily executed it. I shall tell you nothing more about it, however, lest, through excess of tenderness and delicacy toward your old

flame, you might shrink from carrying out my scheme. For, however good and true men may be—however good and true you are to my Louisa—they always preserve a little weakness for their earlier loves, and sometimes think of them with secret satisfaction, and would be sorry to give them pain. But I am a woman, and women are vindictive toward the false of their own sex, especially when the happiness of a beloved and virtuous daughter may be threatened by the wiles of one of them. I would therefore revenge Louisa on Ludovicka Hollandine. But fear nothing, my son; it will be no bloody revenge; at most it could only cause the blood to mount to Ludovicka's cheeks, if she were still capable of shame, which, alas! I doubt. Make no further inquiries, but simply receive the ambassador's visit, and permit him to communicate to you his information. But I urge that this be done as speedily as possible after the arrival of my letter, for Ludovicka has her spies everywhere, even in the house of my minister in Berlin, and if she gets wind of this affair, she will not await developments, but abscond beforehand. Therefore be silent, even with Louisa, and delay not to grant the ambassador the desired interview without ceremony and without witnesses."

"I really can not understand what it signifies," said the Elector, laughing, when he had read over Princess Amelia's letter for the third time. "However, I can trust to her prudence and discernment, so that things may take their course. I will send Künkel to the Princess Ludovicka forthwith, and request her to breakfast with us in Louisa's apartments, where I shall join her in a half hour myself, as I have some important communications to make to her. She will certainly come, for she will think that her vile, contemptible plan is about to succeed, and that I have actually been ensnared in her devilish toils! Yes, the hour of reckoning is now come, and to-day I shall also balance accounts with Burgsdorf. To-day for the last time will he enter my cabinet."

An hour later the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine entered the cabinet, where she found the Electress at her husband's side. She came with radiant countenance and beaming eyes, and a triumphant smile hovered about her lips, for she did

not doubt but that the Elector had requested her to come here because he would prepare her a triumph over her humiliated rival, and because her plan had proved successful.

The Electress suspected nothing of all these things; her husband, conformably to Princess Amelia's wishes, had allowed nothing of her mother's plans of vengeance to transpire, and only told her that Count Brandtrup was coming to impart to them both and the Princess important tidings relating to family affairs.

Louisa Henrietta advanced, therefore, to meet the Princess in a perfectly simple, unembarrassed manner, and greeted her with a friendly smile. Frederick William, on the other hand, had not a word of response for her cordial greeting, and met her smile with firm, defiant mien.

"Tell me, Ludovicka," asked the Electress, "are you not very curious with regard to the news Count Brandtrup brings us?"

"What news?" cried the Princess. "I know nothing about it. Is Count Brandtrup coming here?"

"Yes, indeed," replied the Elector. "My mother-in-law's envoy will appear here immediately. He has important family tidings to communicate to us, in the name of the Regent, who expressly desired that your highness might be present at this audience."

"Strange," murmured the Princess. "Louisa, your mother was never particularly partial to me, and it is a wonder to me that she has all at once thought of me."

"Is that really a source of wonder to your grace?" asked the Elector. "After long years of roving about the world, did you not think of us, and receive us again into your affection—and that to such a degree that you would have us believe you could content yourself here in our wretched old castle, and could find pleasure in the monotonous and virtuous life we lead here, though it is assuredly not in the least to your taste."

The Princess had turned pale, and the smile had faded from her lips. She was in the act of making a sharp and angry retort, when the door opened, and the gentleman of

the bedchamber von Maltzan announced Count von Brandtrup.

"Let him come in," said the Elector, "and take care, Maltzan, that nobody else be admitted while the count is here."

"But, your Electoral Highness, the count does not come alone. He brings a whole company with him. Shall I not admit those persons?"

"The count himself is to decide that," replied the Elector. "Let him enter."

"I am indeed curious to know what all this signifies," murmured Ludovicka, sinking into the armchair placed beside the Electress's sofa.

The door was now opened, and the Dutch ambassador entered. With stately steps he approached the Electress and bowed reverentially before her, then turned to the Elector and saluted him with just as low a bow. For Princess Ludovicka Hollandine, however, he had no eyes, no salutation.

"Know, count," said the Elector, "that we are very curious to learn the tidings of which you are the bearer! First of all, relieve our minds, and tell us that they are not of a melancholy nature."

"Not in the least melancholy, your highness. They only concern an act of justice, a well-merited punishment, inflicted in accordance with the spirit of holy writ, which says, 'If an eye offend thee, pluck it out; if one of thy members offend thee, cast it from thee.'"

"And to whom are those words of holy writ to be applied?" asked the Elector.

"Your highness, to a member of the house of Orange, who has brought much care and sorrow upon that illustrious family, and would bring yet more if it were not lopped off the vigorously shooting tree as a withered branch. I stand here in the name of Princess Amelia, Regent of the Netherlands, and in obedience to her commands I read the following:"

He drew forth a paper, unfolded it, and read:

"We, Princess Amelia of Orange, Regent of the States and head of the house of Orange, and as such intrusted with the defense of virtue and good morals, and charged with

maintaining in its purity the religion of our house and not suffering it to be corrupted, accordingly notify you, the sons and daughters, the relations and connections of our house, to this effect, that we now and forever renounce the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine of the Palatinate; we——"

The Princess started from her seat with a loud cry of indignation.

"Sit down," cried the Elector, "in the name of the Princess Regent, I charge you sit down and listen!"

She sank back into the armchair as if annihilated, and only a single angry flash of her eyes fell upon the Elector's face. With imperturbable tranquillity Count Brandtrup read on:

"We forbid her to consider herself a member of our family, and forever withdraw our protection from her. She has forsaken and abjured the religion of her fathers, she has secretly absconded from her mother's house, forsaken also her second home and family. She shall therefore now be forsaken and given up by her family and——"

"Stop, oh, stop!" cried the Electress, with tears in her eyes. "Do not be cruel, read no more!"

"On the contrary, Electress," said Ludovicka, "let him read on, and have the goodness to play no longer this farce of emotion, for it is you yourself who have called into life this highly dramatic scene, and prompted your mother to this act of Christian piety."

"I?" asked the Electress, painfully shocked. "Do you believe that I——"

"Electress," interrupted Frederick William, "have the goodness to hear what more the count has to read."

Count Brandtrup composedly continued his sentence where he had left off:

"And shall be regarded as a stranger by us all. We forbid her to set foot within the boundaries of our dominions; she is banished for life from the States; and nothing belonging to the Princess Ludovicka shall remain within the limits of our land. We therefore send her——"

"Stop!" cried the Princess, trembling, "hold, read no more!"

But Count Brandtrup continued with elevated voice: "We therefore send the Princess the only treasures which she still possesses in Holland, and which she deposited here since her sojourn in France; we send them beyond our boundaries to the tender Princess, that she may provide for them elsewhere. We command our minister at Berlin, Count Brandtrup, to commit these treasures to the Princess of the Palatinate in the presence of the Elector and Electress of Brandenburg."

"But I—I forbid you to do so!" cried the Princess, her eyes flashing fury. "I forbid you to carry any further this insult, this malignity!"

"Madam," said the count coldly, "it is for no one to command or forbid me to do anything, save God and the Princess Regent. What she prescribes, that I do."

So speaking, he strode across to the door and opened it. "Enter, little ladies, enter," he said.

There appeared in the doorway two charming little girls, aged two and three years. Beautiful were they to behold with their blonde, curly heads, their dark, expressive eyes.

"Mesdemoiselles Virginie and Lucie de Villars," said the count, "go to your mother, the Princess Ludovicka, and kiss her."

The little children stepped timidly forward, and there appeared in the door two other little girls, a few years older.

"Mesdemoiselles Laura and Aimée de Brantôme," continued the count, "go and kiss your mother, the Princess Ludovicka."

And as they stepped forward, two sprightly boys, of seven and eight years, entered the door.

"Vicomte Turenne and Monsieur Champion," said the count, "go to your mother and kiss her hand."

They had not taken more than one step forward, when two larger boys appeared upon the threshold of the door.

"My young Vicomtes d'Entragues——" said the count, with perfect gravity, but the Elector interrupted him with a peal of loud, hearty laughter, to which the Princess replied with a shriek of rage. She thrust back the two little girls, who were about to take her hand, so violently that they fell

backward to the ground, then with a vehement movement of her hand she waved off the rest of the children, and with proud, quick step swept through the apartment, tore open the door, and disappeared behind it.*

"It serves her right," said the Elector to himself. "She would scatter the seeds of evil, and they have sprung up to prove her own ruin!"

The Electress had hardly seen that the Princess had withdrawn. She had sprung from her seat and hastened to the little girls whom their mother had thrown down. She had picked up the lovely little creatures, and, kneeling between them, had drawn them to her side, and sought to comfort them with gentle soothing words.

Count Brandtrup approached her. "If your highness will permit me," he said, "I will take the children away with me again."

"And whither would you take them, count?" asked the Electress, tenderly embracing the children again.

"They go with their governesses and tutors to the Palatinate, where their grandmother, the Electress, will provide for them."

. . . . . .

An hour later a carriage drawn by four horses rolled out of the castle gate. The windows were closed, the curtains lowered. Within sat the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine. White with passion, with tears of rage in her large, sparkling eyes, she drove off. No one had taken leave of her, no one had bidden her an affectionate farewell, as she stepped into the carriage. Only a few lackeys had stood beside the coach door and helped her in. Solitary and alone she drove away, never again to return to her family and relations. Queen Anne of Austria and Mazarin rewarded her zeal in behalf of French policy by making her Abbess of Meaubuisson, and for a long time still she pursued her scandalous course of life in that abbey.

Hardly had the Princess left the castle, when Burgsdorf

* The Princess Ludovicka Hollandine was, without being married, the mother of fourteen children, and, as the Duchess of Orleans relates in her letters, boasted without reserve of this fact.

entered the Electoral cabinet with his portfolio under his arm. He came with his wonted gay and jovial bearing, with the haughty confidence of a favorite who knows his own power and consequence, and has no doubt of their duration. The Elector sat before his writing table, and his eyes rested sadly and gloomily upon the entering minister.

"What would you have here?" he asked, with thundering voice.

Burgsdorf started and looked bewildered. "Your highness, I come as I do every day, to the meeting of the privy council."

"You come in vain," said the Elector, rising. "You shall never more attend a meeting of the privy council."

"Why not, your highness?" asked Burgsdorf, who endeavored to preserve his bold, free-and-easy manner.

With threatening mien the Elector stepped close up to him. "Why not?" he asked, with glances of burning indignation. "Have you still spirit enough to ask why I dismiss you? Well, I will tell you. Because there is a Dionysius's ear in this castle, and because, when rafters creak and dust sifts through boards in the ceiling, you may know that it is not caused by rats."

"Your highness! oh! my dear, gracious Elector!" shrieked Burgsdorf, dropping the portfolio, his knees knocking together so violently that he sank to the floor. "Have pity, have mercy, I entreat you!"

"You entreat in vain," said the Elector gravely, almost sadly. "All is over between us. I had determined to punish you more severely, and to accuse you in full council as a traitor, as the paid spy of a foreign power, but I thought of the long years gone by, of the love borne you by my father and myself. I thought of your gray hairs and your old age, and in my heart, I have already forgiven you the grief you have caused me."

"You have forgiven me, your highness?" cried Burgsdorf joyfully. "You will again be a kind and gracious Sovereign to me?"

"Yes, a kind and gracious Sovereign, for, instead of publicly accusing you, I shall dismiss you with all secrecy. But

to-day, in the course of one hour, you are to leave Berlin and to retire to your estates. From there you will address me a petition, desiring me to dismiss you from all your offices."

"Sir, you banish me, you drive me from your presence!" lamented Burgsdorf. "You are not in earnest, surely you will relent!"

"No," said the Elector, "I shall not relent. You have banished yourself from my regards, driven yourself from my presence. Go and live happily, if you can. I shall have no suit instituted against you, for I would not be unmindful of the services rendered by you to my house in earlier days. The papers in the archives, too, which might compromise you, shall be given up to you,* and I shall preserve silence with regard to your tricks and treasons. I well know that you will take advantage of this, and say that I dismissed you because you opposed me in the recent Diet, and had set yourself against the tax which I am thinking of introducing. I will allow you this satisfaction for the sake of all the pleasant hours which I have passed with you. Only, keep a guard upon your false tongue, that it never dare to speak against the Electress, for then you shall learn to know me as an inexorable and severe master. Go now, and remember that in one hour you must have left Berlin. Go!"

"Sir, my beloved Elector, at least permit me to kiss your hand. You have often called me your father, and——"

"Hush!" interrupted the Elector imperiously. "Speak not of things which are dead and buried. Be silent, and go without uttering another word. Conrad von Burgsdorf, you are dismissed."

Burgsdorf groaned aloud, let his head sink upon his breast, and reeled out of the room.†

The Elector still sat motionless, sadly looking after him. Then he slowly drew his hand across his eyes. "I loved

* Conrad von Burgsdorf died in the next year (1653) on his estate of Gusow. After his downfall he had become a raging opponent of the Elector; "but he," says Droysen, "took no notice of the abuse and vituperation with which the ingrate requited him. His death put an end to further vexations." (Droysen, vol. iii, part 3, p. 69).

† Historical. *Vide*, Droysen, ibid.

him," he said, "and it is a bitter thing to be obliged to lose a friend before death has called him hence. Ah! life makes us poorer every day in joys and hopes, and the ideals of our youth go not with us to the tomb. But this one, O God! this one let me hold fast to the end! This one ideal, that I may lift my country, which Thou hast intrusted to me, out of poverty and degradation, and make it great and strong; that I may make my people happy, free, and independent, winning for them a place among the civilized nations of the earth. To that end, bestow upon me thy blessing, O Lord my God! and help me, so that from the little Electorate of Brandenburg may spring up a mighty and united kingdom! Amen!"

THE END.